

# RACISM IN QUÉBEC : ZERO TOLERANCE

Report of the Groupe d'action  
contre le racisme

December 2020



## Letter from the Groupe d'action contre le racisme

December 14, 2020

Dear Premier:

*Please find enclosed the report of the Groupe d'action contre le racisme following our completion of the task you entrusted to us on June 15, 2020.*

### **Making progress in the fight against racism**

*You gave us an important and demanding mandate to develop a series of effective actions to combat racism.*

*Under the banner "Racism in Québec: Zero Tolerance," we are proposing a set of concrete actions to help Québec move toward a society without racism.*

*Throughout our process, we kept in mind the reality of those who are the most vulnerable to racism, and our focus has been on making progress in the fight against the racism and racial discrimination they face.*

### **Action**

*We did not want to simply add another report to those of the many commissions on this issue. We are going in another direction, and the very name of the group you established clearly reflects the will to take action.*

*This is effectively what you will find in our report: we are proposing action to change things in the right direction.*

### **Enriching encounters**

*To fuel our reflections, we met with representatives of civil society organizations, Indigenous organizations and individuals directly involved in the fight against racism.*

*These meetings began as soon as the task force was created and continued almost to the completion of our work. They proved to be very enriching and inspired us profoundly in drawing up our recommendations.*

## The people most vulnerable to racism: Visible minorities and Indigenous people

*In our society, two main groups are particularly vulnerable to racism and discrimination: visible minorities and Indigenous people.*

*We wanted to broach the actions to combat the racism experienced by these groups separately. Our report is therefore divided into two sections, depending on whether the proposed actions concern visible minorities or Indigenous people. You will note that in several cases, similar actions have been identified for both groups, although those actions would be implemented differently.*

*We paid specific attention to the situation of Indigenous people. The history of the First Nations and Inuit, their cultures and the laws that govern them place them in a unique situation. It was essential to take into account the realities of Indigenous people while respecting their unique characteristics and their contribution to our society.*

## For an even better Québec

*Québec is an open and welcoming society.*

*This does not excuse us from further improvements in the fight against racism, however. In this area, we have a moral duty to strive for excellence, and we firmly believe it is possible to go further in this direction.*

*That is the goal of this report.*

*Above all else, the actions identified here are intended to help us work together toward a common ideal: that of an even better Québec, a Québec without racism.*



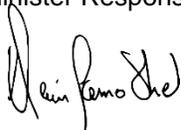
**Lionel Carmant,**  
Minister for Health  
and Social Services



**Nadine Girault,**  
Minister of International Relations  
and La Francophonie,  
Minister of Immigration, Francization  
and Integration



**Ian Lafrenière,**  
Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs



**Denis Lamothe,**  
MNA for Ungava,  
Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister  
Responsible for Indigenous Affairs



**Christopher Skeete,**  
MNA for Sainte-Rose,  
Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier for Relations  
with English-Speaking Quebecers



**Sylvie D'Amours,**  
MNA for Mirabel



**Isabelle Lecours,**  
MNA for Lotbinière-Frontenac

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## INTRODUCTION

Québec is an open and inclusive society.

Since the early 1960s, Québec has welcomed a growing number of immigrants from around the world, and their integration into our society has been highly successful.

Public schools have played an essential role in helping them integrate into Québec society. Multi-ethnic neighbourhoods foster increased intercultural contacts. Québec recognizes and values cultural diversity.

### Too much ongoing prejudice

Despite these successes, racial prejudice and discrimination are ongoing.

Certain behaviours toward visible minorities,<sup>1</sup> Indigenous people and other minorities are still too often driven by mistrust or even rejection. These behaviours affect them in the workplace and in access to housing, to name just two areas where racism<sup>2</sup> is still prevalent in our society.

These explicit findings alone justified the Québec government's creation of the Groupe d'action contre le racisme.

### **The death of George Floyd**

The tragedy experienced last May 25 in the United States with the death of George Floyd deeply affected Québec, giving a new urgency to our collective reflection on racism and how to fight it. His death, which occurred during a police arrest, sent shock waves both inside and outside the United States. Images of his arrest spread quickly around the world, provoking sometimes very strong reactions against racism and police violence.

In Québec, George Floyd's death immediately sparked new discussions and reflections on racism and the best ways to combat it.

On May 31, 2020, Premier François Legault expressed the existing consensus by stating that George Floyd's death was an unspeakable tragedy, reminding us that the evil of racism still exists. He went on to say that all humans are equal, regardless of their skin colour, and that we must continue the fight to eradicate racism.<sup>3</sup> On June 1, the Premier added that this is not the kind of society we want in Québec and that, as Premier of Québec, he strongly condemned it, acknowledging that we know racism still exists and that we must fight it.<sup>4</sup>

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1. In this report, the term "visible minority" is reserved for people other than Indigenous people who are members of minority groups because of their race or the colour of their skin. This is the definition used in section 1 of the *Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies* (CQLR, c. A-2.01).

2. In this report, the term "racism," when used alone, should be construed to include racial discrimination.

3. François Legault on Twitter, May 31, 2020, 8 p.m.

4. Press conference by Premier François Legault on Monday, June 1, 2020, and reported on the 98.5 Montréal website.

## **Creation of the Groupe d'action contre le racisme**

The urgency to act therefore became immediately apparent. On June 15, 2020, Québec's Premier announced the creation of the Groupe d'action contre le racisme.

### **Mandate**

The task force was mandated to submit concrete recommendations to the government by the fall of 2020.

The Groupe d'action contre le racisme was specifically asked to develop a series of effective actions to fight against racism by identifying which sectors have high-priority needs for measures in this area, particularly public security, justice, school systems, housing and employment.<sup>5</sup>

### **Addressing the unique realities of Indigenous people**

On June 15, 2020, the Premier specified that the task force should take into account the particular realities experienced by members of visible minorities and Indigenous communities.

Like visible minorities, Indigenous people are victims of racism or prejudice resulting from a lack of knowledge of their history, culture and realities.

As part of its mandate, the Groupe d'action contre le racisme was asked to contribute to the reflection on how to respond to the recommendations of the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec, chaired by the Honourable Jacques Viens.<sup>6</sup>

### **The tragic death of Joyce Echaquan**

This aspect of the mandate entrusted to the task force took on added urgency following the tragic death of Joyce Echaquan on September 28, 2020. This woman from the Atikamekw Nation died in the Joliette hospital after having recorded testimony about the abuse and racism she was being subjected to.

The conditions surrounding Joyce Echaquan's death spurred a deeply emotional reaction and concretely illustrated the racism that First Nations and Inuit people may face.

On October 6, 2020, the Premier said: "One week ago, we learned of the horrible circumstances surrounding Ms. Echaquan's death. The recording of her last moments is hard to bear. [...] Words alone cannot suffice. In the coming weeks and months, we will, above all, act so that five or ten years from now, we will remember Joyce Echaquan's tragedy as the moment when we collectively took action."<sup>7</sup>

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5. Refer to <https://www.quebec.ca/en/government/policies-orientations/translate-to-anglais-groupe-daction-contre-le-racisme/>.

6. The Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: Listening, reconciliation and progress submitted its report to the government on September 30, 2019.

7. Premier François Legault extends on behalf of the Québec government an official apology to the family and loved ones of Joyce Echaquan, Press Release, Government of Québec, Secrétariat aux Affaires autochtones, October 6, 2020.

## **Members of the task force**

On June 15, 2020, the Premier also announced the members of the task force.

Co-chaired by Lionel Carmant and Nadine Girault, the Groupe d'action contre le racisme was made up of:

- Ian Lafrenière, who has since been appointed Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs;
- Denis Lamothe, MNA for Ungava and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs;
- Christopher Skeete, MNA for Sainte-Rose and Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier for Relations with English-Speaking Quebecers;
- Sylvie d'Amours, MNA for Mirabel;
- Isabelle Lecours, MNA for Lotbinière-Frontenac.

Lionel Carmant, Minister for Health and Social Services, and Nadine Girault, Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie, Minister of Immigration, Francization and Integration, are both members of visible minorities. Following the creation of the Groupe d'action contre le racisme, they both acknowledged how this issue affects them personally.

Mr. Carmant spoke of his personal experience: "As a young man, I experienced racism. I was randomly stopped by police a few times because I was driving my parents' car. I always told myself afterwards that I didn't want my children and grandchildren to have to go through that in their lives and that if I could move things in the right direction, I would. Now I'm being given that opportunity and I'm taking it."

When the creation of the task force was announced, Ms. Girault recalled: "I have experienced racism many times in my career." She then explained the mandate entrusted to the task force: "We know that minorities are under-represented everywhere in our society. Recognizing the problem is part of the solution. But we have to admit that it has been going on for too long. We have to go further and clearly create obligations of result."

## **The chosen approach**

To carry out its mandate, the Groupe d'action contre le racisme wanted to hear the views of different groups and individuals involved in one way or another in the fight against racism and discrimination.

### **Consultations**

The Groupe d'action contre le racisme met with representatives of civil society organizations, Indigenous organizations and human rights organizations, as well as academics, experts, researchers and citizens concerned about the issue of racism. The meetings began as soon as the task force was established and continued until its work was almost completed. The members of the Groupe d'action contre le racisme held 51 meetings with organizations, groups and individuals.

For the Groupe d'action contre le racisme, it was a question of understanding the perspectives of these people and organizations concerning solutions and concrete actions to urgently carry out to address racism in Québec.

A webpage was created on June 16. An email address was made available to allow citizens to communicate with the Groupe d'action contre le racisme.<sup>8</sup>

### **Analysis and research**

The task force also drew on existing anti-racism policies and on the example of initiatives from specific cities, Canadian provinces, the federal government and abroad.

It also requested notes and information from relevant government departments and agencies to provide answers to questions it wanted to explore further.

## **Racism: A reality that is still too present**

After the end of its meetings and discussions, the Groupe d'action contre le racisme found that the racism that affects visible minorities and Indigenous people is still an all-too-present reality.

A number of strong measures must be adopted to combat racism. Racism is unacceptable, whichever minorities it affects. In a democratic and open society such as Québec, racism cannot be tolerated.

Racism against Indigenous people has several specific aspects. Particular attention is required to combat it, taking into account the realities of their situation.

Another reality that must be taken into account is that of women, whether they are members of visible minorities or Indigenous. They are far too often victims of intersectional discrimination that compromises their economic and social participation.

## **A two-part report**

The task force's recommendations are therefore presented in two separate sections, depending on whether they concern visible minorities – i.e., non-Indigenous groups who are victims of racism – or the specific situation of the First Nations and Inuit.

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<sup>8</sup>. [gacr@mce.gouv.gc.ca](mailto:gacr@mce.gouv.gc.ca)

## **The task force and “systemic racism”**

Before outlining the actions it recommends, the Groupe d’action contre le racismisme wishes to address the concept of “systemic racism,” which has occupied a significant part of the public debate for several months.

The task force is aware of the discussions generated by this term.

### **No consensus, polarized positions**

The task force has found that there is no consensus in Québec society on what the term “systemic racism” means or on the actions that arise from it. The consultations carried out by the task force reflected this lack of consensus.

Some organizations and individuals we met with called for the Québec government to recognize “systemic racism.” Many considered this recognition to be a necessary first step in any effort to combat racism.

Conversely, other organizations and individuals cautioned that ideologies and movements associated with the term “systemic racism” could ultimately undermine anti-racism and social cohesion efforts.

Fundamentally, no clear and undisputed definition of the concept was presented.

The task force also found that in most cases, the positions expressed are quite polarized, leaving no room for compromise.

### **The debate is still open**

The task force wants to point out that, as its very name clearly indicates, it was mandated by the government to recommend concrete actions, not to settle the debate on the matter of “systemic racism.”

The Groupe d’action contre le racismisme will therefore not express an opinion on this concept or its application to the situation in Québec. The report of the Groupe d’action contre le racismisme does not deal with “systemic racism.”

That said, the Groupe d’action contre le racismisme is fully aware that discussions on the issue of “systemic racism” will continue, and that Québec society will continue to debate it.



## PART 1 – STRONG MEASURES FOR A SOCIETY WITHOUT RACISM

Racist behaviour is unacceptable and must be eliminated.

The task force called its report “Zero Tolerance” because this principle clearly states the objective that guided us: the rejection of all forms of racism by Québec society.

The Groupe d’action contre le racisme has identified a number of strong measures for a society without racism, which it encourages the government to implement.

These measures are intended to take action in the following six directions:

- The task force recommends that issues related to policing be addressed head-on, by **putting an end to cases of police discrimination**.
- Concrete action must be taken to **combat racism in access to housing** and thereby respond to an issue that is continually raised by visible minorities.
- We must also **combat racism in access to employment**, particularly by taking action with professional orders and increasing access to public sector jobs and the boards of directors of state-owned enterprises.
- Communication initiatives must be launched to **inform Québécois about the reality of racism**.
- As part of a longer-term vision, the task force recommends **focusing on educating young people to eliminate racism**.
- Finally, in the fight against racism, **the government must play a leading role**, using the mechanisms at its direct disposal.

### The “zero tolerance” principle

The Groupe d’action contre le racisme wishes to send a very clear message in the form of the “zero tolerance” principle.

The principle of “zero tolerance” illustrates the unacceptability of racism. It is an unambiguous expression of the conviction that inspired the task group in its reflections and in the formulation of its recommendations.



## 1. Putting an end to cases of police discrimination

The Groupe d'action contre le racisme recommends that issues related to policing be addressed head-on, by putting an end to cases of police discrimination.

### Two issues

In terms of public safety, two issues related to racism are persistently raised: racial profiling during police stops and police violence related to racism.

With respect to racial profiling, racial bias during police stops appears to be a major issue. Racial profiling during police stops has been pointed out repeatedly. It undermines the community's trust in the police.

The connection between police violence and racism is the other issue that has been raised insistently in the area of public safety.

### **Efforts already undertaken**

Measures have been put in place in recent years to address the issues of racial profiling during police stops and police violence related to racism.

In 2008, the Sûreté du Québec developed a guide to strategies for reaching out to cultural communities (Guide des stratégies de rapprochement avec les communautés culturelles). This guide is currently being updated. Information sessions are offered to newcomers, including temporary foreign workers.

Since 2016, the Ministère de la Sécurité publique has held meetings with community organizations, drafted fact sheets and produced a guide.

The École nationale de police du Québec devotes part of its regular training to examples of racial profiling and the impact of discriminatory practices. A guide on detecting and responding to racial and social profiling was launched in April 2020.

Ville de Montréal introduced a new policy on police stops.

### **One finding**

The Groupe d'action contre le racisme found that, despite all the efforts undertaken, the issues of racial profiling during police stops and police violence related to racism still seem to be present and continue to elicit strong reactions in the communities that are the victims of it.

## Initiatives to undertake in three directions

The task force proposes initiatives in three directions.

### **Putting an end to random police stops**

First of all, the racial profiling so often observed during police stops must cease, which means putting an end to random police stops.

The main purpose of police stops is to provide assistance to a person in need or to prevent anti-social behaviour and the violation of laws and bylaws. These stops must be based on observable facts, however, or on information that gives the police a reason to intervene.

When they are not based on reasonable suspicion, police stops can be perceived as harassment and a form of racism.

The Ministère de la Sécurité publique has adopted a policing practice that prohibits random police stops. This practice prohibits all stops based on race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or social condition. In other words, in order to stop someone, the police must have a clear motive.

This practice does not have the force of law. The task force recommends making it mandatory by adding it to the police code of ethics. This will make it possible to issue an ethics or disciplinary sanction against any police officer who does not comply with it.

This measure will significantly reduce and even eliminate racial profiling.

#### **Action No. 1**

Make the ban on random police stops mandatory.

## **Better equipping police officers for their interventions**

Second, police officers need to be better equipped for their interventions.

The task force recommends that social services workers be incorporated into police services, which could de-escalate many situations rooted in perceptions or prejudices.

The task force would like to emphasize that police officers are not social workers and that police and social workers have different roles to play. Adding social services workers to certain police services would allow these roles to be coordinated.

Social services workers would be added in a way that reflects the realities of each geographic region.

This measure would also help eliminate racial profiling.

### **Action No. 2**

Add social services workers to police services to create mixed patrol teams.

## **Raising awareness about racism among law enforcement agencies**

Third, there is a need to raise awareness about racism among law enforcement agencies. The emphasis should be placed on training and should involve police officers as well as other law enforcement agencies.

Professional development appears to be the most effective way to convey anti-racism, anti-discrimination and anti-profiling messages on an ongoing basis. Professional development allows the content of the initial training to be periodically reviewed, to reinforce its importance in practice and to enhance related understandings.

Professional development designed to more fully inform police services about the issues of racism and discrimination would make it possible to avoid many situations rooted in perceptions or prejudices.

This measure would also help eliminate racial profiling.

### **Action No. 3**

Offer professional development on the issue of discrimination, racism and profiling for police services, correctional services, special constables and other law enforcement agencies.

## Combating racism in access to housing

Racism in access to housing is a problem that is continually raised by the minorities who are the victims of it. Action must be taken to combat racism in access to housing.

Racism with regard to rental housing is poorly documented but it is regularly the subject of complaints. In 2018 and 2019, respectively, 54 and 38 files were opened with the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse for discrimination in access to housing.

The Groupe d'action contre le racisme was presented with numerous examples of racism or discrimination affecting housing applicants at every stage of the process. Discrimination exists from the moment a rental property is advertised, with certain types of tenants sometimes being targeted, as well as when maintenance is requested and after the first visit.

### Two forms of legal protection

Tenants and prospective tenants who are victims of racism or discrimination can appeal to two types of legal protection to fight it.

#### **Charter of human rights and freedoms**

The Charter of human rights and freedoms prohibits discrimination on the basis of race and colour, including in the area of housing. A landlord cannot reject a tenant on these grounds.

The Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse oversees the application of the Charter.

#### **Tribunal administratif du logement**

The Tribunal administratif du logement has exclusive jurisdiction over requests related to residential leases, which applies to cases of discrimination. If the discrimination takes place before the lease is signed, the dispute must be handled by the Commission des droits et des libertés de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse.

Unlike the Commission, the Tribunal administratif du logement has no mandate to initiate action and cannot conduct investigations on the cases it rules on.

### Findings

The task force found that victims of racism by landlords did not make sufficient use of the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse. Moreover, the Tribunal's official complaint process often appears too cumbersome to the victims, which inhibits appeals.

It should be mentioned that municipalities have the power to act with regard to housing. Although it is not required by law, a municipality can develop a housing policy that sets out the principles that will guide its actions.

## Facilitating the complaint process

To combat racism in access to housing, the solution is to facilitate the complaint process and raise awareness about it.

### **Action No. 4**

Combat all discrimination in housing on the grounds of race, colour, ethnicity or national origin by:

- reinforcing the processing of complaints related to racism and discrimination in housing;
- raising the awareness of the public, especially tenants and prospective tenants, about the complaint process;
- raising the awareness of landlords about issues related to racism and discrimination.

### 3. Combating racism in access to employment

The government must put an end to racism in access to employment, in particular by taking action with professional orders and sending a strong signal to the labour market by opening up more public sector jobs.

During the consultations carried out by the task force, it became clear that economic integration and the right to employment are priorities in combating racism.

The integration of every individual into society hinges on accessing a job that matches their knowledge and skills. The higher unemployment rate among some visible minorities illustrates the progress to be made in this regard, as does the under-representation of visible minorities in management positions.

The task force proposes taking action in three areas:

- making construction jobs more accessible;
- improving the recognition of foreign experience and diplomas;
- ensuring that the government sets an example in terms of the jobs and responsibilities under its direct authority.

## **Accessibility to jobs in the construction industry**

Accessing jobs in the construction industry is still a challenge for visible minorities.

In 2016, visible minorities accounted for 4.4% of the experienced labour force in the construction industry, while they made up 12.0% of the experienced labour force across all industries.<sup>9</sup>

### **Measures already in place**

Measures already exist to encourage the integration of visible minorities in the construction industry.

The Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale offers subsidies to cover a portion of the wages of such workers for 30 weeks. It also provides advisory services and financial assistance to employers so they can develop new human resource management practices.

Despite these measures, the task force found that visible minorities are still under-represented in the construction industry.

### **Recommendation**

The task force recommends that the Commission de la construction du Québec be mandated to develop measures to promote access to construction jobs for visible minorities.

The Commission is also well positioned to create partnerships with community organizations to promote construction trades among visible minorities and create a recruitment pool.

#### **Action No. 5**

Mandate the Commission de la construction du Québec to promote construction trades among visible minorities and create a pool of candidates for recruitment purposes.

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<sup>9</sup>. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, CO-1824 Table 1. Compiled by the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration.

## **Recognition of foreign experience and diplomas**

In terms of access to skilled jobs, immigrants in general and visible minorities in particular face difficulties in having foreign diplomas recognized by the professional orders concerned.

Without such recognition, many immigrants from visible minority groups are unable to find jobs that are commensurate with their skills, which is both deeply frustrating for the individuals concerned and a waste for the society welcoming them.

### **A complex issue**

The recognition of foreign diplomas has been identified as a complex issue, with profound consequences for the individuals concerned and their families. The procedures for recognizing skills and prior education can be lengthy and complex.

### **Proposed action**

The task force therefore recommends a multi-pronged approach. Within the next five years, the government should negotiate international agreements regarding the recognition of professional qualifications.

At the same time, the skills assessments carried out by professional orders need to become more flexible and professional and to ensure that candidates for a profession or regulated trade can begin their recognition process from abroad as well as benefit from individual support.

#### **Action No. 6**

Within the next five years, negotiate and conclude international agreements on the recognition of professional qualifications.

Make the skills assessments carried out by professional orders faster and more flexible for immigrants covered by these mutual recognition arrangements.

Offer individual support to candidates for a profession or regulated trade and ensure that the skills recognition process can begin from abroad.

## **Public sector jobs**

The government has a leading role to play in offering employment opportunities to visible minorities.

The public sector is a major employer, offering jobs that require an extremely wide range of skills. Further opening public sector jobs to visible minorities should have a ripple effect on the private sector, pointing the way forward.

### **Increasing the proportion of visible minorities in public administration**

The under-representation of visible minorities in the public sector is an issue that is pointed out regularly. In 2016, visible minorities accounted for 13% of Québec's population.

Many measures have been put in place over the years to increase the representation of visible minorities in Québec's public administration.

In the case of public bodies, these measures are based on the Charter of human rights and freedoms and the *Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies*. The Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse oversees the application of the *Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies*. Every three years, the Commission publishes a report on the state of equal access to employment in the public bodies governed by the Act.

In the case of government departments, access to jobs for visible minorities is subject to the *Public Service Act*. The Programme d'accès à l'égalité en emploi pour les membres des minorités visibles et ethniques is primarily aimed at increasing the presence of visible and ethnic minorities in Québec's public service.

It should be noted that this program has not produced the expected results.

### **Taking action with government departments**

The task force is of the opinion that it is time to strengthen the measures in place and closely monitor the outcomes.

The task force recommends that the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor issue instructions to government departments to meet the targets set for visible minority representation in the public service.

#### **Action No. 7**

Within the next five years, increase the representation of visible minorities among public service employees to reflect their representation in Québec's labour force.

## Taking action on the composition of boards of directors

The Québec government can also play a leading role by taking action on the governance of state-owned enterprises.

Visible minorities are currently under-represented on the boards of directors of state-owned enterprises. The Secrétariat aux emplois supérieurs has already taken action in this regard under the Politique favorisant la constitution de conseils d'administration des sociétés d'État.

The task force recommends that the majority of boards of state-owned enterprises subject to the *Act respecting the governance of state-owned enterprises* have at least one visible minority member within the next five years.

### Action No. 8

Ensure the presence of at least one visible minority member on the majority of boards of state-owned enterprises within the next five years.

## 4. Informing Québecers about the reality of racism

Communication initiatives must be launched to inform Québecers about the reality of racism.

### The need to raise public awareness about the reality of racism

Of all the topics discussed during the consultations conducted by the task force, raising public awareness about the reality of racism was the one that came up most often.

This seems necessary in order to eliminate the prejudices that exist in a portion of the population, to tackle certain individual behaviours and also to reduce gaffes and ignorance.

In recent years, several Québec government departments and bodies have carried out communication activities designed to raise awareness about the reality of racism at specific events.

The task force found, however, that, to date, no anti-racism awareness campaigns appear to have been directed at the general public. A general public campaign on the theme of combating racism would be a first. Changing behaviours and attitudes requires long-term awareness efforts, and a national advertising campaign is a concrete action the government could undertake to combat racism.

#### **Action No. 9**

Develop a national anti-racism awareness campaign to keep the public constantly informed about the various aspects of racism and discrimination.

## Focusing on educating young people to eliminate racism

As part of a longer-term vision, the action group recommends focusing on educating young people to eliminate racism, informing them and training teachers.

### Educating young people

The mission of the education sector is to train the citizens of tomorrow.

For the Groupe d'action contre le racisme, the education of young people is a priority area of intervention, both to build shared citizenship in Québec based on integration and to combat racial discrimination from a very young age.

Currently, racism is forbidden as a form of violence, under section 13 of the *Education Act*.

### **Ethics and Religious Culture program**

Teachers enjoy professional autonomy in the pursuit of this mission and, to this end, rely on the ministerial curricula, as well as training and tools.

The Groupe d'action contre le racisme paid particular attention to the Ethics and Religious Culture curriculum, taught in primary and secondary schools, which includes the objective to promote better “living together” through the practice of dialogue. The Québec Ministère de l'Éducation has begun a review of this program.

The consultations carried out by the task force confirm the strategic nature of the content of this program, in part because of the vision of life in society and social relationships it has the potential to convey to the younger generations. The current review of this program offers an opportunity to highlight the realities experienced by visible minorities and to better educate students about the issues of racism and discrimination.

#### **Action No. 10**

Include racism and discrimination issues throughout the school curriculum.

## Teacher training

Teachers need to be better equipped to address and deal with a subject as sensitive as racism.

In initial teacher training, the mandatory training does not include courses on racism. Training future teachers on the issue of racism during their university studies would make them aware of prejudice or racism and prepare them to present these concepts in class.

### **Action No. 11**

Include the theme of racism in the mandatory courses for initial teacher training.

## 6. A government that sets an example

The government must set an example in the fight against racism, using the mechanisms at its direct disposal.

### The appointment of a minister responsible for the fight against racism

The Groupe d'action contre le racisme recommends that Québec take a major step forward by appointing a minister responsible for the fight against racism and racial discrimination.

It is important for the government to place the fight against racism under ministerial responsibility, to facilitate the implementation of related measures and ensure close monitoring of initiatives undertaken with departments and agencies.

Almost unanimously, the organizations and individuals consulted by the task force emphasized the need for the government to designate a ministerial official to combat racism, in order to increase accountability for the outcomes of the actions taken.

### **Leadership in combating racism**

Designating a governmental official responsible for the fight against racism would make it possible to consolidate what is already being done and to structure governmental action by defining a guideline, in coordination with all the stakeholders.

The appointment of a minister responsible for the fight against racism would give greater visibility to the government's interventions, clearly establishing its leadership in this area.

#### **Action No. 12**

Appoint a Minister responsible for the fight against racism.

### Investing in training for government employees

In the opinion of the task force, the government's leadership role in the fight against racism should also be reflected in all its employees.

The task force therefore recommends that the government invest in training on racism, to be taken by all government employees. The content of the training would be developed by the minister responsible for the fight against racism. The training would be mandatory and continual.

#### **Action No. 13**

Introduce continual, mandatory training on the issue of racism for government employees.

## PART 2 – ASSERTIVE ACTIONS TO RESPOND TO THE REALITIES OF FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT PEOPLE

In establishing the Groupe d'action contre le racisme, the Premier made it clear that the particular realities of Indigenous peoples should be specifically addressed.

The history, socio-economic situation and unique status<sup>10</sup> of First Nations and Inuit peoples place them in a situation that differs significantly from that of immigrants and visible minorities.

### The two most recent reports

Many consultations and reports have examined the situation of Indigenous nations, in Canada and in Québec, including issues of racism and discrimination against members of these nations.

Two of these reports – the report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, released on June 3, 2019, and the report of the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec (the Viens Commission), tabled on September 30, 2019 – are currently being followed up on by the Québec government.

### Follow-up by the Québec government

In response to the recommendations of the two commissions of inquiry, the Québec government's 2020–2021 budget<sup>11</sup> allocates \$200 million in new funding over five years.

In recent weeks, several actions have been announced by the Québec government in relation to this commitment. These actions concern health, education and public safety, and nearly \$40 million in new resources has been allocated to them.

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<sup>10.</sup> Most members of First Nations are governed by the *Indian Act*, which gives them a unique status inherited from the colonial era. Indigenous people also hold collective ancestral rights, which are recognized by the Canadian constitution but the scope of which has yet to be negotiated with governments.

<sup>11.</sup> Your Future, Your Budget. Budget Plan, 2020–2021, March 2020, p. D.66.

## The approach of the task force

It was in this context that the Groupe d'action contre le racisme addressed the Indigenous aspect of its mandate. In its work, the task force met with many Indigenous representatives.

On September 29, the Assembly of First Nations Québec-Labrador unveiled its action plan to combat racism and discrimination, inspired by these two commissions of inquiry.<sup>12</sup>

Many of the recommendations made in the first section of the report with regard to the fight against racism toward visible minorities will benefit Indigenous people, provided they are adapted to their realities.

## **A step forward in measures for Indigenous peoples**

Nevertheless, specific efforts must be made to combat racism against members of Indigenous nations.

The actions recommended by the Groupe d'action contre le racisme are intended to be a step in the government's efforts to this end. They build on initiatives already underway and pave the way for further efforts.

## **Recommendations of the task force**

Specifically, the Groupe d'action contre le racisme recommends that the government take assertive action to respond to the realities of First Nations and Inuit people:

- There is still too much ignorance about the history of First Nations and Inuit peoples' rights, and the time has come to **make the history, cultures, heritage and current situation of Indigenous peoples better known to all Québécois**.
- Initiatives must be undertaken to respond to one serious issue by **ensuring the cultural safety of Indigenous people in public services**.
- The fight against racism in police services takes on a particular dimension in the face of the realities experienced by Indigenous people. We must **put an end to police discrimination**.
- Access to justice is problematic for Indigenous people, and this must be addressed by **improving access to justice**.
- Outside of their communities, Indigenous people suffer discrimination in terms of housing. **Housing conditions for Indigenous people must be improved**.

On November 17, 2020, a new step was taken in the nation-to-nation dialogue between the Québec government and the First Nations with the establishment of a joint political table. In the opinion of the task force, this dialogue must be continued in the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

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<sup>12</sup> AFNQL Action Plan on Racism and Discrimination – Engaging with First Nations against Racism and Discrimination – September 29, 2020.

## Two commissions of inquiry

### **National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was established in 2016 by the federal government with a mandate to examine the systemic causes of all forms of violence, including sexual violence, against Indigenous women and girls.

One volume of the National Inquiry deals specifically with the services offered by the Québec government to Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

The final report, called *Reclaiming Power and Place*, was made public on June 3, 2019. This report contains 231 calls for justice, in addition to 21 calls for justice specifically for Québec.

### **Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services**

The Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services was chaired by the Honourable Jacques Viens.

Established by the Québec government in 2016, following allegations of violence, intimidation, harassment and the sexual assault of Indigenous women by police officers, the Commission's mandate was to investigate and make recommendations for corrective action to prevent or eliminate all forms of violence and discriminatory practices in the delivery of public services to Indigenous people.

The Commission submitted its report to the Québec government on September 30, 2019. The report contains 142 calls for action.

Beyond combating racism and discrimination, the recommendations of the Viens report aim to adapt services so they are fair, culturally safe and respectful toward Indigenous people.

On October 2, 2019, in reaction to this report, the Premier of Québec said in an address to the National Assembly: "I offer Québec's First Nations and Inuit people the heartfelt apologies of the Québec state as a whole. It has failed in its duty toward you, and today it seeks your pardon." The Premier added: "Just like for Québec as a whole, we must do more and do better. We must work alongside the First Nations and the Inuits. [...] Today, with this statement, I can confirm that Québec will answer that call."<sup>1</sup>

(1) Ministerial statement. The Premier offers an apology to Québec's First Nations and Inuit people on behalf of the Québec government. October 2, 2019. Press release. Gouvernement du Québec, Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones.

## AFNQL Action Plan on Racism and Discrimination

On September 29, 2020, after the establishment of the Groupe d'action contre le racisme, the Assembly of First Nations Québec-Labrador released an action plan to combat racism and discrimination.

This action plan proposes 39 major recommendations for municipalities, educational institutions, businesses, the media and all civil society organizations, as well as individuals.

To build its action plan, the AFNQL drew in particular on the recommendations of the two commissions of inquiry held in Québec and Canada, the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

## A Joint Québec – First Nations Political Table

The establishment of the joint political table by the Québec government and the First Nations was announced on November 17, 2020, by Ian Lafrenière, Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs, and Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Québec-Labrador.

Chaired by the Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs and the Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Québec-Labrador, this political table will establish nation-to-nation agreements and advance common issues to improve daily life in First Nations and Inuit communities. It will also foster dialogue with a view to implementing the calls to action made by the Viens Commission.

The joint political table will also host a meeting between the Premier of Québec and all the chiefs and grand chiefs over the coming weeks. Details about this upcoming meeting will be finalized with the Indigenous chiefs and officially announced shortly.

## 1. Making all Québecers more familiar with the history, culture, heritage and current situation of Indigenous people

There is still too much ignorance about the history and rights of First Nations and Inuit peoples. This gap perpetuates stereotypes and prejudices, leading to the stigmatization of Indigenous people.

Over the past couple of decades, however, there has been an increasing individual and collective desire to learn more and gain a better understanding of Indigenous people.

### A multi-pronged approach

The Groupe d'action contre le racisme is of the opinion that a concerted effort involving awareness, education and training must be undertaken to increase Québecers' understanding of the historical, cultural and current realities of Indigenous peoples and their heritage.

To achieve this, the task force recommends a range of initiatives to raise awareness about the situation of Indigenous people among:

- the population at large,
- professional orders,
- teachers,
- young people,
- government employees.

## A campaign to raise awareness about Indigenous peoples among the population at large

A campaign to raise awareness about the Indigenous peoples of Québec, their history, their cultural diversity and the discrimination that they have faced and still face would give Québécois a better understanding of the current situation of First Nations and Inuit peoples and deconstruct prejudices while building alliances.

The Viens Commission report expresses a similar desire by recommending that the government, “working with Indigenous authorities, carry out a public information campaign on Québec’s Indigenous peoples, their history, their cultural diversity and the discrimination issues they face.”<sup>13</sup>

### **A component of the anti-racism campaign**

As outlined earlier, one of the measures that was strongly recommended by the task force to eliminate racism against various minorities consists of launching a national anti-racism awareness campaign to keep the public continually informed about the various aspects of racism and discrimination (Action No. 9).<sup>14</sup>

One component of this campaign should be specifically dedicated to Indigenous people, with special attention to Indigenous women and girls, as recommended by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.<sup>15</sup>

This component should be developed in collaboration with First Nations and Inuit representatives.

#### **Action No. 14**

Include in the national anti-racism awareness campaign a specific component on the realities of Indigenous peoples, to continually inform the public about the racism and discrimination experienced by First Nations and Inuit people.

<sup>13</sup>. Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: Listening, reconciliation and progress, 2019. Final report, Call for action No. 20, p. 249.

<sup>14</sup>. See above, page 26.

<sup>15</sup>. Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Volume 1b, Call for Justice 1.9, p. 178, and Reclaiming Power and Place: Volume 2 – A Supplementary Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Call for Justice 7, p. 156.

## Raising awareness within professional orders

A specific effort to raise awareness about Indigenous realities must be made with the professional orders.

This recommendation from the task force echoes one of the measures put forward by the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec (Viens Commission). The Commission called for the contribution of several stakeholders to allow Québec's citizens and professional orders in particular to understand the history of Indigenous peoples, their knowledge and the diversity of their cultures.

The Viens Commission report recommends that the government “make the professional orders aware of the importance of including content in their training programs, developed in cooperation with Indigenous authorities, that addresses cultural safeguards and the needs and characteristics of First Nations and Inuit.”<sup>16</sup>

### **Action No. 15**

Make the professional orders aware of the importance of training their members on Indigenous realities.

## Initial teacher training

To combat racism against minorities, the task force recommends making racism a mandatory subject in initial teacher training (see Action No. 11).<sup>17</sup> As pointed out, teachers would then be better equipped and more comfortable broaching and tackling subjects that are both important and sensitive.

Teacher training should directly and specifically include the historical realities, cultures and heritage of Indigenous people, as well as their impact on the current lives of the province's population.

Efforts to this effect have been launched by the Ministère de l'Éducation in collaboration with the Secrétariat aux Affaires autochtones and Indigenous organizations in the education sector, as part of the mandate of the Comité d'agrément des programmes de formation à l'enseignement. The task force recommends that the history and current realities of Indigenous people become a mandatory part of initial teacher training programs.

### **Action No. 16**

Make the history and current realities of Indigenous people in Québec a mandatory part of initial teacher training programs.

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<sup>16.</sup> Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services..., *op.cit.*, Call for action No. 24, p. 250.

<sup>17.</sup> See above, page 28.

## Educating young people

The task force recommends raising young people's awareness of racism and discrimination throughout their entire school career (Action No. 10).<sup>18</sup> This recommendation could be implemented through the Ethics and Religious Culture program.

In addition to this major shift, it should be acknowledged that part of what is taught about First Nations and Inuit people needs to be updated. In addition to reforming the Ethics and Religious Culture program, the content of the Social Universe (History) course should also be reviewed to update the way Indigenous people and their history are presented.

The objective is to raise awareness from an early age of the history behind the complex ties that connect Indigenous peoples and Québec society. This awareness would have long-term effects.

### **Action No. 17**

Change the academic curriculum at the primary and secondary levels to update concepts related to the history, cultures, heritage and current realities of Indigenous peoples in Québec and Canada and their impact on society.

## Training government employees

The Secrétariat aux Affaires autochtones worked with Indigenous representatives to develop an online training program for government employees in the public and parapublic sectors. The Secrétariat aux Affaires autochtones is developing specific modules that explore certain issues, to enhance the general training on Indigenous realities.

The task force would like this training to be mandatory, continual and expanded to include modules that cover certain issues related to Indigenous realities.

### **Action No. 18**

Introduce continual, mandatory training on Indigenous realities for government employees.

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<sup>18.</sup> See above, page 27.

## 2. Upholding the cultural safety of Indigenous people in public services

The cultural safety of Indigenous peoples in public services is a serious issue that was presented to the task force, particularly in light of the tragic events surrounding the death of Joyce Echaquan.

### The concept of cultural safety in the health sector

Cultural safety refers to the concept of cultural safeguards.

The challenges faced by Indigenous people in the health and social services network are primarily cultural. The rigid application of measures, laws and regulations is perceived as a discriminatory practice that serves to block access to services.

A lack of knowledge of Indigenous realities and cultures affects all aspects of health services, from the maximum number of visitors allowed in hospitals and access to traditional foods to the use of Indigenous languages and healing practices.

On November 6, the government marked its commitment to provide a solution to this challenge by allocating \$15 million to apply the concept of cultural safeguards in the health sector – that is, ensuring that the cultural identity of the patient is respected during the provision of healthcare.

#### Cultural safeguards

The concept of cultural safeguards was proposed in New Zealand in the late 1980s in order to combat the marginalization and discrimination experienced by Maori people in the health system.

Cultural safeguards were initially a relational means of discussing nursing care.

The concept has since been expanded. In general, cultural safeguards aim to create a safe cultural environment that supports the full development of capacities and communities.

## A challenge that affects all public services

Indigenous people face similar difficulties in the education sector and, more generally, in other public services.

The Viens Commission report refers to the need to introduce a comprehensive cultural safeguard approach to create welcoming settings for Indigenous peoples with respect to public services and health services in particular.<sup>19</sup>

The task force heard about specific incidents in which Indigenous people were prevented from speaking their language by public service representatives. A ban of this kind runs completely counter to the objective of promoting and preserving cultural identity. It should be mentioned that there is no directive that authorizes such a ban in the health and social services network.

The task force recommends that the government send a clear signal to uphold the cultural safety of Indigenous people in public services by putting an end to practices that prevent people from speaking Indigenous languages while receiving public services.

### **Action No. 19**

End the informal practice of prohibiting people from speaking Indigenous languages while receiving public services.

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<sup>19</sup> Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services..., *op.cit.*, p. 368.

## Cultural safeguards in the health and social services network

### **An investment of \$15 million**

On November 6, 2020, the Québec government announced an investment of \$15 million to enhance cultural safety for First Nations and Inuit people in the health and social services sector.

Training will be offered to all hospital centre employees to familiarize them with the concept of cultural safeguards. This effort will focus on hospital centres and hospitals that serve Indigenous populations.

The government will hire liaison officers to work in institutions to handle relations with Indigenous communities.

“Service navigators,” preferably Indigenous, will also be deployed in the field. The mandate of these employees will be to guide and support Indigenous patients in the care system.

### **A global and integrated approach**

Ensuring the cultural safety of Indigenous people in the health and social services network requires a global, integrated approach that will be implemented in three stages.

- First, it requires working closely with Indigenous people to improve relations and build lasting trust.
- Second, cultural safety will be the responsibility of all stakeholders across the network, who will have to be aware of Indigenous knowledge and realities so they can offer services that are free of prejudice.
- Third, cultural safety affects the way services are organized. Key functions must be provided both at access points and within the health and social services system to break down sociocultural access barriers and improve the efficacy of care.

This approach requires taking action on several issues at once, through training, supporting organizational best practices, introducing “service navigators” and liaison officers, as well as improving monitoring and quality.

### 3. Putting an end to cases of police discrimination

The task force decided to address head-on the issues related to combating racism in police services by recommending action on police stops (Action No. 1) and better equipping police officers in their interventions to end police discrimination (Action No. 2).<sup>20</sup>

These recommendations, which target racism against all visible minorities, take on a specific dimension in light of the realities experienced by Indigenous people.

#### Police stops

Police stops based on race, colour and ethnic origin affect Indigenous people and Indigenous women in particular.

Indigenous women are vulnerable when they have to interact with police services. In Montréal, in particular, Indigenous women are regularly targeted by police stops. According to a report published in 2019, Indigenous women are 11 times more likely to be stopped by police than white women.<sup>21</sup>

The task force therefore recommends, once more, making the ban on random police stops mandatory, emphasizing the specific impact of police stops on Indigenous people.

The task force was also informed about the challenges faced by Indigenous police services when intervening in specific situations such as conjugal and domestic violence, the sexual exploitation of minors and investigations. The government's announcement on December 4 regarding investments of \$18.5 million to improve the police services provided to Indigenous people addresses these challenges.

#### **Action No. 20**

Make the ban on random police stops mandatory.

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<sup>20</sup> See above, pages 16 and 17.

<sup>21</sup> [https://spvm.qc.ca/upload/Rapport\\_Armony-Hassaoui-Mulone.pdf](https://spvm.qc.ca/upload/Rapport_Armony-Hassaoui-Mulone.pdf).

### **Government allocates \$18.2 million to improve policing in Indigenous communities**

On December 4, 2020, the Québec government announced a set of actions to improve the delivery of policing services to Indigenous communities.

These actions respond to several recommendations made in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: Listening, reconciliation and progress (Viens Commission).

These actions seek to:

- combat the sexual exploitation of Indigenous girls and women;
- train Indigenous police officers and improve police interventions;
- hire liaison officers and train correctional services officers.

Additional funding of \$18.2 million has been allocated to implement these actions.

## **Mixed patrol teams**

The same is true of the recommendation to better equip police officers in their interventions, to put an end to cases of police discrimination by adding social services workers to certain police services (Action No. 3).<sup>22</sup>

By incorporating Indigenous social services workers into law enforcement agencies, the task force seeks to foster a different approach that will build bonds of trust and eliminate many situations rooted in perceptions or prejudices.

Social services workers would be added in a way that reflects the realities of each community.

It is worth noting that in the case of Indigenous people, mixed patrols made up of police officers and social workers have been recommended by the Viens Commission<sup>23</sup> and the Assembly of First Nations Québec-Labrador.<sup>24</sup>

### **Action No. 21**

Add Indigenous social services workers to some police services to create mixed patrol teams.

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<sup>22</sup> See above, page 18.

<sup>23</sup> Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services..., *op.cit.*, Call for action No. 37, p. 280.

<sup>24</sup> The Action Plan recommends evaluating them. AFNQL Action Plan on Racism and Discrimination – Engaging... *op.cit.*, Recommendation 32.

## 4. Improving access to justice

Access to justice is problematic for Indigenous people.

### **Scarcity of specialized resources**

The scarcity of specialized resources can make it difficult for Indigenous people to access legal information or receive adequate support during their passage through the justice system, from either lawyers or courtworkers, particularly in remote communities and in Nunavik. Deprived of fair access to justice due to factors beyond their control, First Nations and Inuit people are at risk of having their rights denied.

Access to justice could be improved for Indigenous people by relying on community organizations that have the specific mission of guiding Indigenous people through the justice system.

#### **Action No. 22**

Increase the resources of Indigenous community organizations that promote access to justice for First Nations and Inuit people.

## Gladue reports and interpretation services

Gladue reports are an essential part of Indigenous access to justice in criminal matters.

### **Access to Gladue reports**

The term “Gladue” is derived from the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision in *R. v. Gladue* in 1999, some of the principles of which were clarified in *R. v. Ipeelee* in 2012. In that decision, the Supreme Court stated that when the court plans to impose a jail sentence, in sentencing for criminal offences, judges must pay particular attention to the distinctive historical factors and individual histories that have brought Indigenous people to court. To do this, judges may order a Gladue report for an Indigenous person who has been found guilty of a crime.

The Gladue principle promotes a restorative approach, while ensuring that offenders are subject to appropriate sentences that take into account their Indigenous heritage or background. In Québec, Gladue applies to anyone who identifies themselves as Inuit or First Nations.

The task force recommends that the government ensure that the justice system has the capacity to rely more on Gladue reports in criminal trials involving First Nations and Inuit people.

#### **Action No. 23**

Improve the capacity of the justice system to address the heritage and life trajectory of Indigenous offenders by granting more resources for the use of the Gladue principle specific to First Nations and Inuit people.

### **Availability of interpretation services**

Also in terms of making access to justice easier and more equitable for Indigenous people, the task force recommends improving interpretation services in Indigenous languages.

#### **Action No. 24**

Improve the quality and availability of interpretation services in Indigenous languages for better access to justice.

## 5. Improving housing conditions for Indigenous people

In cities, Indigenous people suffer discrimination in housing.

Low reported incomes make it difficult for Indigenous people to access housing, particularly single Indigenous mothers. The racism expressed by some landlords is a major barrier to finding a place to live. The lack of housing, in both cities and communities, creates a slate of psychosocial and economic problems.

Furthermore, government housing programs do not necessarily take into account the specific situation of Indigenous people.

The task force recommends allocating additional resources to housing for off-reserve Indigenous people.

This measure is intended to facilitate access to adequate housing for Indigenous people in the urban environment and to promote the development of housing projects for this specific community, in particular by improving and adapting the programs they could benefit from and by grouping and translating information on a dedicated website.

On November 27, the government allocated new resources to the construction of housing centres for Indigenous students.

### Action No. 25

Increase resources allocated to off-reserve housing.

### The government invests \$18.4 million in the construction of housing centres for Indigenous students

On November 27, 2020, the Québec government announced an \$18.4 million investment to support the construction of three housing centres for Indigenous students.

This investment will improve the accessibility of education for members of First Nations.

Three centres will be built in collaboration with Indigenous partners. In addition to affordable housing, integrated and culturally relevant services will be offered to the tenants and their families.



## CONCLUSION

Racism is unacceptable.

In accordance with its mandate, the task force identified a number of concrete initiatives to combat racism and its many forms. These actions relate to various areas where the people most vulnerable to racism face discrimination because of the colour of their skin or their ethnic origin.

The task force has chosen to focus its efforts on the best ways to effectively make progress in the fight against racism.

### **Combating racism against visible minorities**

In the first section, which is dedicated to racism against visible minorities, the task force proposes a number of specific initiatives to put an end to cases of police discrimination, to fight racism in access to housing and to combat racism in access to employment.

The task force also wants to better inform Québécois about the reality of racism and to tackle racism through the education of young people. In the fight against racism, the government must play a leading role, using the mechanisms at its direct disposal to put an end to disparities based on race.

### **Combating racism against Indigenous people**

The task force wanted to dedicate the second section of its report to the issue of racism against Indigenous people.

Indigenous people experience their vulnerability to racism in a very particular context. For the task force, it was essential to take this particular situation into account and provide appropriate responses. These responses are intended as a step in current and future initiatives in favour of Indigenous people.

The task force proposes making all Québécois better acquainted with the history, cultures, heritage and current realities of Indigenous people, to uphold the cultural safety of Indigenous people when receiving public services and to put an end to cases of police discrimination. Initiatives have been identified to improve access to justice and to improve housing conditions for Indigenous people.

### **An even better Québec**

The task force called its report “Zero Tolerance” because a society such as Québec must reject all forms of racism.

Québec is proud to have built an open and welcoming society.

With these proposed actions, the task force hopes to take a step toward making this society even better, by eliminating racism and the discrimination that accompanies it.



## APPENDIX – LIST OF ACTIONS

### Part 1

#### Strong Measures for a Society Without Racism

##### **Putting an end to cases of police discrimination**

###### **Action No. 1**

Make the ban on random police stops mandatory.

###### **Action No. 2**

Add social services workers to police services to create mixed patrol teams.

###### **Action No. 3**

Offer professional development on the issue of discrimination, racism and profiling for police services, correctional services, special constables and other law enforcement agencies.

##### **Eliminating racism in access to housing**

###### **Action No. 4**

Combat all discrimination in housing on the grounds of race, colour, ethnicity or national origin by:

- reinforcing the processing of complaints related to racism and discrimination in housing;
- raising the awareness of the public, especially tenants and prospective tenants, about the complaint process;
- raising the awareness of landlords about issues related to racism and discrimination.

## Ending racism in access to employment

### Action No. 5

Mandate the Commission de la construction du Québec to promote construction trades among visible minorities and create a pool of candidates for recruitment purposes.

### Action No. 6

Within the next five years, negotiate and conclude international agreements on the recognition of professional qualifications.

Make the skills assessments carried out by professional orders faster and more flexible for immigrants covered by these mutual recognition arrangements.

Offer individual support to candidates for a profession or regulated trade and ensure that the skills recognition process can begin from abroad.

### Action No. 7

Within the next five years, increase the representation of visible minorities among public service employees to reflect their representation in Québec's labour force.

### Action No. 8

Ensure the presence of at least one visible minority member on the majority of boards of state-owned enterprises within the next five years.

## Informing Québecers about the reality of racism

### Action No. 9

Develop a national anti-racism awareness campaign to keep the public constantly informed about the various aspects of racism and discrimination.

## Focusing on educating young people to eliminate racism

### Action No. 10

Include racism and discrimination issues throughout the school curriculum.

### Action No. 11

Include the theme of racism in the mandatory courses for initial teacher training.

## A government that sets an example

### Action No. 12

Appoint a Minister responsible for the fight against racism.

### Action No. 13

Introduce continual, mandatory training on the issue of racism for government employees.

## **Assertive Actions to Respond to the Realities of First Nations and Inuit People**

### **Making all Québécois more familiar with the history, culture, heritage and current situation of Indigenous people**

#### **Action No. 14**

Include in the national anti-racism awareness campaign a specific component on the realities of Indigenous peoples, to continually inform the public about the racism and discrimination experienced by First Nations and Inuit people.

#### **Action No. 15**

Make the professional orders aware of the importance of training their members on Indigenous realities.

#### **Action No. 16**

Make the history and current realities of Québec's Indigenous peoples a mandatory part of initial teacher training.

#### **Action No. 17**

Change the academic curriculum at the primary and secondary levels to update concepts related to the history, cultures, heritage and current realities of Indigenous peoples in Québec and Canada and their impact on society.

#### **Action No. 18**

Introduce continual, mandatory training on Indigenous realities for government employees.

### **Upholding the cultural safety of Indigenous people in public services**

#### **Action No. 19**

End the informal practice of prohibiting people from speaking Indigenous languages while receiving public services.

### **Eliminating police discrimination**

#### **Action No. 20**

Make the ban on random police stops mandatory.

#### **Action No. 21**

Add Indigenous social services workers to some police services to create mixed patrol teams.

## Improving access to justice

### Action No. 22

Increase the resources of Indigenous community organizations that promote access to justice for First Nations and Inuit people.

### Action No. 23

Improve the capacity of the justice system to address the heritage and life trajectory of Indigenous offenders by granting more resources for the use of the Gladue principle specific to First Nations and Inuit people.

### Action No. 24

Improve the quality and availability of interpretation services in Indigenous languages for better access to justice.

## Improving housing conditions for Indigenous people

### Action No. 25

Increase resources allocated to off-reserve housing.