

QUÉBEC REPORT ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



PRESENTED
TO THE WORLD SUMMIT
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, AUGUST 26 TO SEPTEMBER 4, 2002

Québec 

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The following government departments and agencies have collaborated to produce this report:

Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail
Hydro-Québec
Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation
Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
Ministère de l'Éducation
Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale
Ministère de l'Environnement
Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce
Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole
Ministère des Finances
Ministère des Relations internationales
Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration
Ministère des Ressources naturelles
Ministère des Transports
Secrétariat à la jeunesse
Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones
Secrétariat aux affaires intergouvernementales canadiennes
Secrétariat aux priorités et aux projets stratégiques
Société de la faune et des parcs
Société d'habitation du Québec
Société de récupération et de recyclage (RECYC-Québec)
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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTERS



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*Mr. André Boisclair,
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*Mr. Jean-François Simard,
Minister for the
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Québec is pleased to participate in the World Summit on Sustainable Development which is being held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from August 26 to September 4, 2002. The UN Commission on Sustainable Development, which is organizing the event, has asked all states to report on the implementation of sustainable development and the challenges to be met in this respect. Following the example of other nations in the world, Québec is presenting a report on what it has accomplished from the standpoint of sustainable development since the Rio Earth Summit 10 years ago.

This report, prepared by the Comité interministériel sur le développement durable (interdepartmental committee on sustainable development), reflects the seriousness of Québec's undertaking. The Québec government has sought inspiration in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the Agenda 21 program and is constantly promoting sustainable development. The fight against poverty, the reduction of greenhouse gases, the maintenance of biological diversity, the prevention of all forms of pollution, and integrated water management are objectives that require the mobilization and participation of all members of civil society, including women, young people, aboriginal peoples and their communities, non-governmental organizations, local communities, workers and labour unions, commerce and industry, the scientific and technical community, and farmers.

Sustainable development implies a change in behaviour, modes of production and consumption patterns and relies on cooperation and partnership between all stakeholders in society. The Québec government has a longstanding tradition of partnerships with civil society, as evidenced by the recent strategy entitled Protected Areas in Québec: A Pledge for the Future, the implementation of the Québec Strategy on Biological Diversity and the Québec Action Plan on Climate Change 2000-2002, the Politique de gestion des matières résiduelles (recovery and recycling policy) or the elaboration of the impending Politique nationale de l'eau (Québec water policy).

Québec thus brings to the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development a commitment by all Quebecers to sustainable development, and is confident that states and governments alike will understand the urgency and necessity of pursuing their efforts to enhance the quality of life of the citizens of all nations.

Québec is willing to join with other nations in order to foster better governance aimed at reconciling economic development, ecological sustainability and social equity.



Québec in a nutshell

Québec is one of 10 member states of the Canadian federation. The *British North America Act*, which established Canada in 1867, created the federal and provincial governments.

Canada's Constitution attributes exclusive jurisdiction in certain fields to the federal government, e.g. defence and currency, and to the provincial governments (including the Québec government) in other fields, e.g. health, education, natural resources, municipal affairs, land use planning and development and intraprovincial transportation. Some fields of jurisdiction, agriculture and immigration, in particular, are shared.

A number of the issues to be discussed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg fall under Québec's jurisdiction.

Québec's territory and population

Some 70% of Québec's territory lies in the northern zone, and the province extends from the St. Lawrence River plain to the Hudson Strait. Québec has a total area of roughly 1.7 million km², three times the size of France and five times the size of Japan. For the most part, inhabited zones are adjacent to hardwood and mixed forests. Further north, coniferous forests of diminishing density are the predominant vegetation. Tundra covers the far north.

The climate in Québec's vast territory varies significantly from north to south and from east to west, depending on latitude, landforms and maritime influences on weather. Average temperatures range from 5°C to 20°C during the summer and from -10°C to -25°C in the winter, which lasts from five to eight months, depending on the region.

Québec has a population of 7.4 million and a majority of Quebecers are French-speaking. There are nearly 740 000 English-speaking Quebecers, most of them living in the Montréal area. The 77 800 aboriginal peoples, comprising 68 400 Amerindians and 9 400 Inuit, are descendants of North America's first inhabitants. Each year, Québec welcomes over 35 000 immigrants from a hundred countries. By the end of the 20th century, some 700 000 immigrants from all over the world were integrated into Québec society.

Québec's economic, social and demographic situation, characterized by a rapidly aging population, generally reflects that of the developed countries.

Québec's population, which has grown fairly slowly over the past 30 years, is unequally distributed. The population of urban centres is growing faster than that of remote rural areas, where the number of inhabitants is actually declining in some cases. In metropolitan areas, population growth is occurring above all in communities on the outskirts of central cities.

In 2002, nearly 80% of Quebecers were concentrated in six urban centres with populations of over 100 000, i.e. Montréal, Québec City, Gatineau, Saguenay, Sherbrooke and Trois-Rivières, and in 26 municipalities with between 10 000 and 100 000 inhabitants. Urbanized areas play a prominent role in economic development since they account for 85% of jobs in Québec.

An economy open to the world

The size of Québec's industrialized, modern economy is comparable to that of European countries such as Denmark. As is the case in all of the industrialized nations, Québec has undergone sweeping changes in recent decades.

The Québec economy is dynamic, diversified and open to the world. In 2001, gross domestic product (GDP) reached nearly C\$217 billion (in constant 1997 dollars), compared with C\$170 billion in 1993. In 2000, per capita GDP stood at nearly C\$24 000 (in 1997 dollars), up from C\$22 000 in 1995. (It should be noted that the Canadian dollar is worth approximately US\$0.65.)

Québec exports of goods and services totalled \$136.1 billion in 2000, making it the world's 30th largest exporting state. Its leading exports are telecommunications equipment (\$8 billion), aircraft and aircraft parts (\$7.9 billion), newsprint (\$4 billion), aluminum (\$3.7 billion), and electronic parts and components (\$3.7 billion).

Various sectors of activity in Québec have undergone extensive changes, all of which are steering Québec toward what is called the new economy. In addition to manufacturing, traditionally the driving force of economic growth, new industries whose success relies on knowledge and innovation have come to the fore. In this new environment, science and technology are playing an essential role in spurring economic growth, while manufacturing is shifting to technology-intensive sectors.

Political institutions

Québec's parliamentary system is modelled on the British system. The National Assembly, comprising 125 members elected by universal suffrage, exercises legislative power.

The Québec Parliament was established in 1791 and is one of the oldest parliaments in the world. It is not quite as old as the American Congress but its foundation was contemporary with that of France's National Assembly.

Administrative institutions

The Québec government comprises over 20 departments that underpin government organization. Secretariats in certain departments assume important specific responsibilities, such as the Secrétariat à la jeunesse, in charge of youth issues, or the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, responsible for aboriginal affairs.

In order to achieve autonomy, specialization, efficiency, visibility and collegiality, legislators decided to transfer or attribute certain administrative functions to autonomous agencies instead of government departments. The government organization chart includes roughly 175 public corporations, councils, offices, boards, commissions and administrative tribunals. Each body reports to a minister, who is accountable to the National Assembly for its management, subject to judicial or quasi-judicial responsibilities.



Parliament sits in the Québec National Assembly.

MIRN – René Trucid

Administrative organization of the territory

Québec is divided into 17 administrative regions, which are specific territories that vary considerably in area. In 2001, the Nord-du-Québec region had only 39 530 residents scattered over an area of 839 696 km², while the region corresponding to Montréal Island had 1 838 470 inhabitants in an area of 499 km². The Nord-du-Québec region includes the territory of Nunavik, located north of the 55th parallel, which has 14 Inuit municipalities and a Naskapi village.

Each of Québec's 17 administrative regions has a regional development council, at least one third of whose members are elected municipal representatives and representatives of other community organizations. The council is responsible, by and large, for ensuring cooperation between regional stakeholders and managing the funds granted to it under regional development agreements reached with the government.

With the adoption of the *Policy Supporting Local and Regional Development* in 1997, the Québec government delegated to local and regional bodies mandates respecting regional cooperation and planning, assumed by regional development councils, and local front-line service management and delivery mandates, assumed by local development centres.

The regionalization and decompartmentalization of public services has made possible the adoption of intersectoral approaches that facilitate the on-site resolution of practical problems. By participating in regional development councils, regional councils of labour-market partners and local development centres, members of civil society may contribute to the elaboration and implementation of development strategies and initiatives.

Organization of municipal bodies

Québec has 1 147 local municipalities, including nine cities with over 100 000 inhabitants that account for 53% of its overall population but cover only 0.2% of its territory. Moreover, 775 municipalities (68% of the total) have fewer than 2 000 inhabitants. Upper-tier local government comprises the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal, the Communauté métropolitaine de Québec and 87 regional county municipalities (RCMs). Municipal authorities exercise their powers in fields of activity in which they have exclusive jurisdiction, or in which they share jurisdiction with the Québec government.



Tourisme Québec – Linda Turgeon

Montréal is Québec's metropolis and its economic engine.

Culture

In North America, Québec is noteworthy, in particular, for its culture, of which the French language is a distinctive basic trait. Moreover, its aboriginal and European heritage, the proximity of the United States and various influences stemming from immigration make Québec a cultural crossroads between Europe and North America.

Québec has developed a dynamic, original culture nurtured by artists and works that are known the world over. This success is especially striking in the variety show sector, although Québec has, in recent years, achieved international renown in the realms of theatre, dance, cinema, literature, the visual arts, advertising and multimedia. Throughout the French-speaking nations and communities of the world and the world at large, the audience for and influence of Québec artists far exceed Québec's relative demographic weight.

The health-care system

The Québec health and social services system provides a broad array of services based on four key principles: universality, fairness, the public nature of the system, and the ongoing adaptation of services. The system, established by the *Act respecting health services and social services*, seeks to maintain, enhance and restore Quebecers' health and well-being.

The health and social services system encompasses over 600 hospitals and other public and private establishments and hundreds of medical clinics. It employs nearly 10% of the Québec labour force.

In each region of Québec, the government has established a regional health and social services board. In this way, each region can develop its own mode of organization adapted to:

- its population;
- its geography;
- its socio-economic and cultural traits;
- the establishments found there.

The education system

The education system has four levels of instruction:

- elementary education, including preschool education;
- secondary education, including general training at two levels and vocational training;
- college education, which comprises two paths, i.e. pre-university training and technical training;
- university, which comprises three levels.

Overall education spending in Québec is second only to health spending. It accounts for 7.4% of GDP, compared with 6.3% in the rest of Canada and 6.9% in the United States.

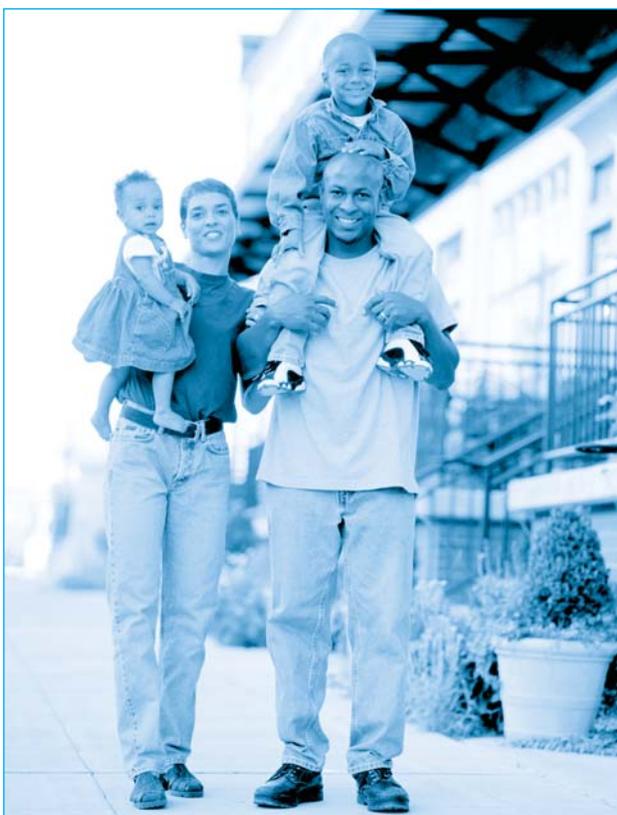
While the dropout rate is a major concern in the education sector, educational paths from elementary school to university reveal the progress Québec has made in the realm of education over the past 40 years. Of 100 members of a given generation, 99 reach secondary school and 81 obtain a high school diploma, 39 obtain a college diploma, 28 complete a bachelor's degree, six obtain a master's degree and one obtains a doctorate. A child entering elementary school can expect to spend, on average, 15 years in the education system.

Preschool, elementary and secondary education are free of charge in Québec's 2 670 public schools, which provide instruction in either French or English. School boards administer the schools and receive a large part of their funding from the ministère de l'Éducation (Québec's department of education), which determines the nature of educational services. The school boards were established in 1845 and act as local governments, administered by school trustees elected by universal suffrage.

Québec in the world

Québec's international relations focus primarily on North America and Europe. Québec also engages in close collaboration with the French-speaking countries, which share with it the use of the French language (there are 112 million French speakers on the five continents).

The Québec government has played a role not only in the establishment and development of international French-language institutions, but also in the definition of their role and the execution of their multilateral initiatives. More specifically, Québec intends to take part in all international forums dealing with education, language, culture and identity.



MRCI

Québec is a multi-ethnic society, open to the world.

As concerns its foreign network, Québec maintains six general delegations, four delegations, seven offices and 12 trade branches established in cities in the United States, Latin America, Europe and Asia. Under their mandate, the general delegations contribute to broadening Québec's influence and fostering its development. They cover the entire range of economic, cultural, political and social sectors. The Québec government delegations and offices cover one or a number of these sectors. The trade branches play an essential economic and commercial role.

Québec's aboriginal nations

There are 11 aboriginal nations in Québec. Ten of these are Amerindian (Abenaki, Algonquin, Attikamek, Cree, Huron-Wendat, Malecite, Mi'kmaq, Mohawk, Innu and Naskapi), with the eleventh being the Inuit nation, whose race and culture differ from that of the Amerindians. Along with the governments, the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi nations have signed agreements that define the legal framework for the territory covered by the agreements and the aboriginal peoples' hunting, fishing and trapping rights.

In 2001, the population of the 11 aboriginal nations totalled 77 800, equivalent to 1% of the population of Québec. The 10 Amerindian nations have a population of 68 400, and the Inuit nation, a population of 9 400. The 11 nations are divided into 56 aboriginal communities, although nearly 18 500 aboriginal people do not reside in these communities. The populations of the communities range from 12 (the Algonquins at Hunter's Point) to 7 140 (the Mohawks at Kahnawake). The Inuit live, by and large, in 14 northern villages around Hudson Bay and Ungava Bay.

A young population

Québec's aboriginal population is very young, much younger than the population as a whole. In 1998, the under-14 age group accounted for 30% of the aboriginal population, compared with 20% in Québec as a whole. The proportion of this age group among the Cree, Inuit, Attikamek and Innu nations is 40%.



Tourisme Québec - Heiko Wirtgenborn

Children under 14 account for about 30% of the aboriginal population in Québec.

Recognized rights

The Québec government recognizes that the aboriginal peoples established on its territory have their own identity and are citizens of Québec. For this reason, they are entitled to the same universal health care, social security and education programs as other Quebecers.

Three nations covered by agreements

Three aboriginal nations have signed agreements with the Canadian and Québec governments. The Cree and Inuit nations signed the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* in 1975 (and various complementary or specific agreements in subsequent years), and the Naskapi nation signed the *Northeastern Quebec Agreement* in 1978. These agreements grant them specific rights on vast territories classified by category: Category I land is for the exclusive use of the aboriginal peoples, while Category II and III lands are public lands on which they possess sometimes exclusive hunting and fishing rights. Under the agreements, approximately \$600 million in compensation and mitigation measures has been provided (in respect of a population of 21 800 in 1997). Part of this amount has been paid into trust funds intended for future generations. The agreements also define the administration of justice and rights in respect of health care, social services, the environment, and so on.

Eight nations not covered by agreements

Most of the eight other aboriginal nations not covered by agreements have signed administrative agreements with the Québec government that define modes of exercising specific hunting, fishing and trapping rights on Québec public lands. These activities, which are inextricably linked to the maintenance of their culture, are an important issue in aboriginal communities. The agreements also cover the judicial system and public security.

For example, Québec has signed salmon fishing agreements with the Uashat-Maliotenam Innu and the Listuguj Mi'kmaq, an agreement on landlocked salmon fishing with the Mashteuiatsh Innu and an agreement on moose hunting with the Huron-Wendat nation. The aboriginal peoples enjoy exclusive hunting and trapping of fur-bearing animals on over 375 000 km² of beaver reserves located outside the lands covered by the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*. Moreover, any aboriginal hunter may hunt and fish year-round for subsistence purposes on his trapping territory. In response to the comprehensive land claims of the Attikamek and Innu nations, Québec is negotiating agreements that make provision for the transfer of lands under full ownership and the identification of territories where the management and use of the territory and its resources would be shared.

The Peace of the Brave

On February 7, 2002, in Waskaganish, Québec Prime Minister Bernard Landry and Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees Ted Moses signed a historic 50-year agreement that marks a new era in relations between Québec and the Crees. This nation-to-nation agreement, negotiated directly by the Québec government and the Crees, heralds a new phase in the economic, social and community development of the James Bay region.

Under the agreement, the Crees will assume broader responsibility for their economic and community development. Moreover, the agreement calls for the realization of major hydroelectric development projects on the James Bay territory and the harmonization of forestry operations with traditional Cree activities.

The agreement calls for increased participation by Cree communities in the development of forest resources, especially through the establishment of the Cree-Québec

Forestry Board and, in the communities in question, joint working groups. Thanks to the Cree-Québec Forestry Board, closer consultation with the Crees can be effected in the planning and management of forest operations and follow-up can be carried out in respect of the forestry component of the comprehensive agreement.

Referendums were held in each village and 70% of the Cree population voted in support of the agreement.



Québec Prime Minister Bernard Landry and Grand Chief of the Cree Ted Moses, at the signing of the Peace of the Brave agreement on February 7, 2002.

Le Grand Conseil des Cris

An agreement with the Inuit to develop Northern Québec

On April 9, 2002, the Québec government, the Makivik Corporation and the Kativik Regional Government signed an agreement in Tasiujaq intended to accelerate economic and community development in Nunavik, located north of the 55th parallel in Québec. The agree-

ment focuses, among other things, on hydroelectric, mining and tourism development. The 25-year agreement was signed in the presence of representatives from the 14 communities of the Inuit nation and the territory's main socio-economic stakeholders.

Dynamic cultures

The aboriginal cultures of Québec are very dynamic, something that is readily apparent in three fields, i.e. spoken language, communications and the arts.

For example, eight of the 11 aboriginal nations have preserved their mother tongue. A report published by the Conseil de la langue française in 1992 reveals that it is in Québec that Canada's aboriginal peoples most readily learn their language: while barely one aboriginal person in two can receive schooling in his or her mother tongue in Canada, more than eight students out of 10 are able to do so in Québec.

Almost all aboriginal communities in Québec have a community radio station that broadcasts in the residents' mother tongue, a powerful means of promoting and ensuring the survival of aboriginal languages. Moreover, there are three aboriginal communication networks and at least a dozen aboriginal print media.

The aboriginal peoples are contributing to the arts and have done so for a long time: Inuit soapstone sculptures have been sold the world over for many years. A number of aboriginal artists are internationally renowned. The communities of Mashteuiatsh, Listuguj, Odanak, Wendake and Puvirnituq have important museums. The Inuit have established the Avataq Cultural Institute and the Innu have set up the Institut culturel et éducatif montagnais (ICEM).

Modern economies

The aboriginal peoples are developing numerous outfitting operations, thus providing local employment. While traditional hunting, fishing and trapping activities remain important among the aboriginal peoples, growing numbers of manufacturing and commercial enterprises are being established, especially in the Huron-Wendat community at Wendake, the Mohawk community at Kahnawake, and the Innu communities at Mashteuiatsh, Essipit and Uashat-Maliotenam. The First People's Business Association has been set up. However, band councils are usually the main employers.

Social and political organizations

Québec's aboriginal nations have established social and political organizations to defend and promote their interests, e.g. the Quebec Grand Council of the Crees, the Makivik Corporation representing the Inuit, the Atikamekw Nation Council, Mamuitun and Mamit Innuat in the Innu communities, the Conseil de la nation des Algonquins Anishnabeg, the Mi'gmawei Mawiomi Secretariat in the Mi'kmaq community, and the Grand Conseil de la nation Waban-Aki in the Abenaki community. The Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador represents the aboriginal nations of Québec and is linked to the Assembly of First Nations in Canada.

Policy directions concerning aboriginal peoples: a relationship of trust based on mutual respect

In 1998, the Québec government adopted policy directions concerning aboriginal peoples in a document entitled *Partenariat, développement, actions*. The policy directions seek to emphasize the development of a relationship of trust based on mutual respect. They reflect the position that Québec has adopted over the years, i.e. that aboriginal peoples are citizens of Québec and have their own identity. Aboriginal and non-aboriginal populations share the same territory in Québec and must necessarily maintain economic, social and political relations.

Through these policy directions, the Québec government intends to meet several challenges in partnership with the aboriginal peoples, i.e. develop their governmental and financial autonomy, intensify their economic development, foster the conclusion of agreements, and enhance relations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Quebecers. The policy directions are intended to ensure that aboriginal and non-aboriginal populations have access to the same living conditions, the same opportunities for development, and their fair share of collective wealth. It also seeks to ensure that the aboriginal peoples preserve their own cultural identity.

Agreements have been signed with the Lac-Barrière Algonquin community concerning an integrated resource development plan, with the Listuguj Mi'kmaq community in respect of the management of 7 000 hectares of forest, with the Algonquin community at Kitcisakik (Grand-Lac-Victoria) pertaining to forest management, the Lac-Simon Algonquin community with a view to developing forest resources in part of the La Vérendrye wildlife sanctuary, and so on. The Québec government and the Kahnawake Mohawk community have signed a *Statement of Understanding and Mutual Respect*, along with a framework agreement and sectoral agreements covering taxation, economic development, public security, the administration of justice and rights of use. Québec has also made payments to five Cree communities and to the James Bay Advisory Committee on the Environment in order to fund technical studies in the forestry sector.

There are several examples of business partnerships between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Quebecers. In Nouveau-Québec, two mining companies have joined with the Inuit and Cree communities to operate the Kattinik (Raglan) and Troilus mines. Partnerships have been initiated in the forestry sector between Domtar and the Waswanipi Cree community in order to establish a sawmill.

Québec has set up a \$125-million five-year development fund for the aboriginal peoples. The fund has two components, one to support aboriginal economic development initiatives and the other to carry out community infrastructure projects.



The Waswanipi Cree model forest.

Ministère de l'Environnement

Combat poverty

Québec, like other nations, regards the elimination of poverty around the world as one of the key challenges of sustainable development. In Québec, the government has for several decades been combating poverty through measures that foster job creation, human resources development and social protection.

Over the years, the measures adopted have changed in conjunction with development issues. However, collective progress has always centred on the values of democracy, respect for rights, social justice and solidarity that have shaped Québec's history and that are widely shared even now.

A promising assessment

Since the early 1960s, substantial investments have been made to stimulate economic growth and employment and to provide the basic services necessary for human development and social protection. However, the maintenance of public services during the economic crises in the early 1980s and 1990s engendered budget deficits. Over the past decade, the Québec government has, through a collective effort, restored balance to public finances. While maintaining and enhancing established privileges, it now intends to pursue this effort in order to free future generations from the accumulated debt.

Québec deems employment to be the best means of achieving the economic and social integration of working-age Quebecers. Job creation is, therefore, a priority, especially in the knowledge-based economy. Québec encourages private investment and strongly supports scientific and technological research. It is also placing greater emphasis on the expansion of industrial sectors in which Québec already excels, the development of social-economy enterprises, and the implementation of local and regional development projects, or projects that foster the development of regions whose economy is based on natural resources. Individuals and employers have access to an array of labour-force and employment support programs. Measures such as the increase in the minimum wage and a gradual reduction in the regular workweek are intended to enhance working conditions.

Québec's prosperity is closely tied to that of the North American economy, which has been growing for the past 10 years. This vitality led to the creation in Québec of some 400 000 jobs between 1992 and 2000, thus ensuring not only the labour-market integration of the increase in the population between 15 and 64 years of age (223 000 individuals) during this period, but also a 28.5% reduction in the number of

unemployed, which fell from 441 800 to 315 500. In 2000, the employment rate of the population between 15 and 64 years of age reached a historic peak in Québec, i.e. 67.3%. The unemployment rate fell from 12.7% in 1992 to 8.4% in 2000.

Québec's prosperity is also closely tied to the ongoing enhancement of worker training. Education is another of the government's developmental priorities in the fight against poverty. Higher levels of schooling, the development of vocational and technical training, a reduction in the school dropout rate, and the alignment of training and labour-market needs are among the measures being pursued.

In Québec, as in other industrialized societies, poverty essentially affects individuals who are unable to find work or who are unable to remain employed for long periods. Certain groups are harder hit by poverty, e.g. under-educated young people, persons with disabilities, single-parent families, recent immigrants facing specific problems when seeking employment, and the aboriginal peoples. Within these groups, women are often harder hit by poverty than men. Poverty is also more prevalent in certain areas such as disadvantaged neighbourhoods in large cities, deteriorating rural municipalities and the resource regions.

Much has been done in the last decade in the realms of economic and social development to combat poverty and promote social inclusion, with encouraging results, something that would not have been possible without the establishment of a close partnership with Québec's dynamic forces.

In 1996, the Québec government stepped up the fight against poverty when it asked its union and management partners and various associations to mobilize in respect of key objectives such as fighting the deficit, revitalizing employment and reforming public services. Several segments of Québec society were encouraged to make a concerted effort in order to restore fiscal balance, ease the tax burden of the least privileged members of society and reduce their reliance on social aid, through job creation and job enrichment.

The government reorganized public services and service delivery areas were harmonized with the territories of local development bodies and land use and development plans, in order to achieve and promote synergy between stakeholders in development. Funds were established to combat poverty directly while encouraging the empowerment of community or social players. Certain initiatives targeted specific clienteles, e.g. women, young people, recent immigrants and persons with disabilities, or territories whose economic performance is lagging.

Québec thus adopted an array of measures designed to financially support individuals in difficulty, eliminate obstacles to finding employment and promote equal opportunity. These measures round out universal programs that already cover educational and health needs, for example. Mention should be made of the following initiatives undertaken by the Québec government.

Employment

- The *Act respecting income support, employment assistance and social solidarity* (1999) establishes a closer link between employment assistance and last-resort financial support.
- The Québec youth fund (\$240 million between 2000 and 2003) supports initiatives focusing on the social, community, cultural and occupational integration of young people between 15 and 29 years of age.
- The rurality policy and rural development fund will have a budget of \$90 million between 2002 and 2007.
- The Fonds de lutte contre la pauvreté par la réinsertion au travail, also known as the anti-poverty fund, (\$410 million between 1997 and 2003) makes grants to municipalities and non-profit organizations in order to help the least privileged members of society to obtain employment.

The underprivileged

- A zero-poverty clause was adopted in respect of the 120 000 Quebecers who are unable, for physical or psychological reasons, to obtain employment.
- Social assistance will be automatically indexed starting in 2003.
- Tax tables will be indexed, which will benefit everyone and increase the number of low-income earners who do not pay income tax.

Families and children

- A new family allowance scheme has been established that guarantees parents in low-income households a child allowance, whether income comes from social assistance or remunerated employment.
- A work income supplement program has been set up for low-income earners with families.
- Educational child-care services requiring a reduced contribution were introduced in 1997.

The aboriginal peoples

- The development fund for aboriginal peoples (\$125 million between 1999 and 2004) was set up to carry out economic development and community infrastructure projects.
- Agreements have been reached to ensure that the aboriginal peoples participate in economic development and resource development.

Women

- A support payment collection plan was established in 1997.
- Pay equity legislation has been adopted.
- Access to credit by women has been facilitated and support has been provided for the start-up and consolidation of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Education and training in the workplace

- The “Agir tôt pour réussir” project was implemented, aimed at enhancing the supervision of young people from underprivileged neighbourhoods in the first cycle of elementary school and at the preschool level.
- Employer contributions to on-site worker training were set by legislation in 1995 at 1% of the total payroll, in the case of payrolls over \$250 000.
- A policy was adopted in 2002 targeting adult education and professional development.

Health and social services

- A new drug insurance plan introduced in 1996 provides basic coverage for individuals not insured by other plans.
- Health and social services and education support programs have been established for poor, vulnerable young parents.

Housing

- A new housing allowance was introduced in 1997 for households receiving income security and low-income households.
- Social assistance benefits in respect of housing will be enhanced starting in 2003.
- Substantial investments have been made in social housing and home renovation, especially in underprivileged neighbourhoods.

Challenges facing society

Economic growth, job creation, human resources development, social protection and the fight against poverty are, increasingly, part and parcel of an ongoing struggle that cannot be won without the establishment of a broad, highly decentralized social partnership. They demand a common approach and the convergence of initiatives aimed at widely recognized targets and, in addition to direct government intervention, the establishment of links that allow for the adequate funding of strategies and initiatives to be pinpointed and implemented by local interveners.

The prevention and reduction of poverty are challenges facing all of society. We must mobilize and bolster the capabilities of civil society and the municipalities. Moreover, the delivery of public services must be adapted and drawn closer to local and regional communities.

There is good reason to more closely adapt various economic and social integration measures to the poorest individuals, groups and territories. Much remains to be done bearing in mind the number of unemployed, individuals still requiring social assistance benefits, or individuals whose incomes fall below the low-income cutoff.

A province-wide commitment

In Québec, in 2002, the fight against poverty depends, first and foremost, on creating jobs and reducing unemployment. It is also accompanied by measures aimed at fostering individual and community development and enhancing the fairness of the apportionment of wealth among socio-economic groups and between men and women. Such measures are designed to tackle the causes of poverty and mitigate its effect. The ongoing assessment of the measures adopted makes it possible to update them periodically.

Québec recently clarified its commitment in the coming years to the fight against poverty and social exclusion, and has elaborated a province-wide strategy in this respect. Draft legislation governing the strategy will be submitted for public consultation in the fall of 2002 to enable individual Quebecers and the representatives of interest groups to express their viewpoints and ensure that a solid consensus underpins the measures adopted.

This strategy focuses primarily on fostering the development of individual potential, strengthening the social and economic safety net, promoting access to employment and job enrichment, encouraging society at large to commit itself, and ensuring the consistency and coherence of the measures adopted at all levels. Government funding and services will support the strategy's implementation and it will be carried out, by and large, under the leadership of local communities.

Through the implementation of its National Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion, Québec is seeking, within 10 years, to rank among the industrialized nations with the lowest poverty levels.



Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale

Québec fights poverty.

Change unsustainable modes of consumption and production

Implementation of the concept of sustainable development demands, among other things, a review of existing modes of production and consumption. Such a review is intended to foster optimum management of resources in order to satisfy the existing needs of communities, while ensuring that the needs of future generations are met as well.

If we are to change unsustainable modes of consumption and production, we must embrace reduction at the source, waste reclamation, restoration, efficient processes, the use of clean technologies, and the delivery of ecologically acceptable products and services.

Among other things, the Québec government is encouraging businesses to adopt the eco-efficient approach with a view to enhancing production processes and fostering the creation of new products that require fewer resources and have less impact on the environment. The Québec strategy to improve competitiveness (*Bâtir aujourd'hui l'entreprise de demain*) advocates the adoption by businesses of best business practices.

The ability of businesses to manage environmental risks will decisively affect their performance and competitiveness. Increasingly, access to capital, customers and leading decision-makers depends on the environmental performance and efficiency of businesses.



With wind power, Québec can diversify its sources of renewable energy.

MRN – Diane Barry

Recovering residual materials

In 1998, Québec generated 9 million tonnes of residual materials, compared with 7 million tonnes in 1989, while the amount of residual materials sent for disposal remained stable at roughly 5.7 million tonnes during the same period. The quantity of recovered materials thus more than doubled between 1989 and 1998, from 1.3 million tonnes to 3.3 million tonnes, equivalent to 38% in 1998.

However, it has been noted that the annual increase in the quantity of residual materials generated is appreciably higher than the increase in Québec's population. Moreover, the percentage reduction in disposal falls far below the initial objective of 50% set for the year 2000. In light of these results, the Québec government decided

to act more vigorously by adopting, in 1998, the *Québec Action Plan for Waste Management 1998-2008*, which calls for the reclamation of 65% of recoverable residual materials annually by 2008. The process adopted provides for residual materials management planning in the metropolitan communities and the regional county municipalities (RCMs) or groups of RCMs, and is geared toward public participation, support for social-economy enterprises engaged in developing the optimum use of residual materials as resources, and safer disposal operations.

Existing legislation makes provision, among other things, for the regulation of the recovery of containers, packaging and printed matter, and the recovery and reclamation of waste oil, oil containers and discarded oil filters.

From regulation to participation

From an environmental standpoint, Québec industrial operations have, until now, been subject primarily to a regulatory approach, centred on the adoption of policies, legislation and regulations, with a view to reducing the levels of industrial pollution observed in water, air, soil and waste.

At the same time, the Québec government has undertaken initiatives aimed at accelerating the development of an industry geared to environmental protection and hence the exporting of local expertise in this field. It has focused on the many industrial problems stemming from water management in Québec, the protection of air quality, the environmental accountability of businesses, the economic costs of environmental protection, contaminated soil, toxic chemicals, hazardous waste, solid waste and wastewater management, the dynamics of recycling in Québec, and environmental technologies.

However, the Québec government has, generally speaking, sought to ensure that the environmental obligations of businesses do not harm their competitiveness, or hamper the ability of local communities to attract foreign investors.

Efficient, environmentally friendly transportation

Transportation plays an essential role in regional and local socio-economic development and the enhancement of the quality of life.

Urban sprawl in Québec's large urban centres affects the dynamic of passenger transportation systems, causing travel routes to shift to geographic areas and economic sectors in which mass transit is barely or not at all developed.

To integrate the development of transportation into land use planning and development, regional plans were devised and made public in 1996 for the Outaouais region, and in 2000 for the Greater Montréal and Québec City regions.

Moreover, Québec is seeking to harmonize transportation with environmental protection. Various measures are

planned to counteract the degradation of the quality of life in urban areas stemming from noise pollution.

The *Québec Action Plan on Climate Change 2000-2002* provides for several measures aimed at enhancing energy efficiency in the transportation sector. In 2002, the Agence de l'efficacité énergétique (energy efficiency agency) intends to implement three large-scale pilot projects designed to improve the fuel efficiency of intercity trucks, coaches and school buses. The projects should engender significant reductions in airborne emissions, given that recent studies have revealed a 30% potential fuel reduction in this sector. In addition, the Agence is preparing a government directive aimed at achieving a 20% reduction in the government vehicle fleet's fuel consumption by 2005.

An energy efficiency policy

Québec remains at the forefront in terms of energy efficiency legislation, especially with regard to new buildings. Besides adopting legislation, it is also carrying out initiatives to heighten public awareness, in particular among young people. The public and parapublic sectors are setting an example by reducing their energy bills, especially in government buildings, schools and hospitals. The municipalities are following the government's lead by launching an impressive number of energy-saving projects.

Québec's energy policy was unveiled in 1996 and centres on four main guidelines:

- 1) ensuring that Quebecers receive the necessary energy services at the lowest possible cost;
- 2) promoting new economic development measures;
- 3) respecting or restoring environmental balance;
- 4) guaranteeing fairness and openness.

The knowledge-based economy

Over the past decade, Québec has witnessed the development of its new economy, which relies more on knowledge than on the consumption of natural resources.

The industrial and commercial sectors have pursued growth against a backdrop of significant change in the industrial structure, increased demand for services, and greater openness by the Québec economy to external markets.

Sustainable tourism

Growing numbers of countries are focusing on sustainable tourism, largely because of the importance of tourism and anticipated growth in international tourism in the coming years, which will make it the foremost international industry. Such growth is exerting pressure on natural and human environments. For this reason, governments are ensuring that development occurs harmoniously and contributes to the protection of heritage and the environment, the enhancement of living conditions, and optimum resource management.

The Québec government fully embraces this development philosophy. It has undertaken a number of initiatives in recent years, e.g. ecotourism projects, ethnocultural visits to aboriginal communities, the conversion of hunting and fishing outfitters' premises to forest inns, the revitalization of old urban districts, the grouping in an association of Québec's most beautiful villages, and so on. The government is currently preparing a comprehensive sustainable tourism strategy and an ecotourism action plan. An extensive quality program is being implemented, to which the government hopes 4 000 businesses will adhere by 2006.

Leading-edge sectors that rely on knowledge have become increasingly important in the economy and have taken the lead with regard to growth, i.e. the aircraft and electronic equipment manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, information technologies and communications industries, and business services.

Knowledge-intensive industries account for 24% of GDP and 46% of the increase in employment in Québec since the mid-1980s. Nearly two thirds of these manufacturing jobs are now located in Montréal.

The service sector has also developed extensively, mainly in response to technological growth, increased demand for consumer and business services, and increased demand for public services. The tertiary sector accounts for nearly 71% of Québec GDP. The service industry employs roughly 2.5 million people, compared with 900 000 in the manufactured goods industry.

The propulsive service industries, comprising, among others, telecommunications companies, electrical utilities, financial intermediaries and business services firms, have contributed significantly to the transition to the service economy.

Protect and manage the essential natural resources required for economic and social development

Québec is aware that the pursuit of sustainable development implies the protection and integrated management of the natural resources (biodiversity, air, water, soil) required for economic and social development and ecosystem sustainability.

The preservation of biological diversity in natural environments

Urbanization and resource development, especially forestry and farming, are the key factors responsible for the loss or alteration of certain ecosystems and wildlife habitats. Acid rain and contamination stemming from industrial emissions and motor vehicles continue to play a leading role in the acidification of waterways. Moreover, climatic change is already forcing plants to adapt and such adaptation must be studied carefully. In 1993, Québec already had at its disposal numerous measures that reflect the spirit of each article of the *Convention on Biological Diversity*. In 1996, the government adopted a strategy to implement the Convention and an action plan designed to refine the attendant measures and procedures. The implementation strategy involves all of the government departments concerned and numerous non-governmental partners. It was revised and submitted for public consultation in 2002.

With the adoption of the *Act respecting threatened or vulnerable species*, Québec took a major stride toward safeguarding endangered species. The Act calls for regulatory protection of such species and their habitats. It promotes the adoption of prevention and protection measures through bequests, acquisitions or agreements with individuals or organizations. Species deemed to be threatened or vulnerable, or likely to be designated as such, are considered as part of projects subject to the environmental impact assessment process, often resulting in the adoption of mitigation or compensation measures. Furthermore, when development plans are reviewed, regional county municipalities are encouraged to protect sites that are important to these species. New rules have been formulated concerning intervention or non-intervention in the habitats of threatened or vulnerable species in public forests.

The ecological reference framework, a key tool for sustainable development

The Québec ecological reference framework is a tool for broadening knowledge of, classifying and mapping terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. It seeks to integrate and use ecological knowledge for the purpose of sustainable management that respects the territory and its resources. In particular, the reference framework has contributed to the joint production by the Canadian Wildlife Service and the ministère de l'Environnement

du Québec (Québec's department of the environment) of the *Biodiversity Portrait of the St. Lawrence*, which presents current knowledge on the flora and fauna of Québec's principal river in the form of an atlas. Local and regional municipalities also use the framework to satisfy various needs, e.g. the elaboration of ecological atlases, watershed management, the protection of heritage landscapes, and so on.

The Québec *Environment Quality Act* stipulates that an authorization certificate must be obtained before the carrying out of work that is likely to contaminate the environment or alter its quality, and all work, activities and structures affecting waterways with regular or intermittent flows, lakes, marshes, swamps, ponds or peat bogs.

In 1996, the *Protection Policy for Lakeshores, Riverbanks, Littoral Zones and Floodplains* was extensively updated in order to enhance the application of standards governing the protection of waterside environments. The policy establishes the minimum protection standards applicable to lakes, waterways and floodplains, and stipulates the sharing of responsibility between the Québec government and local and regional municipalities. To ensure optimum application of the standards, in 1998 the ministère de l'Environnement published a guide to good practices for the protection of shorelines, littoral zones and floodplains. Training courses on the application of the standards were elaborated for municipal inspectors and governmental and non-governmental agencies likely to intervene in hydrous environments.

The establishment of protected areas

Québec intends to establish a vast network of protected areas, which will account for a total of 8% of its territory by 2005. In July 2002, the Québec government announced that 32 000 km² of territory would be put aside with a view to creating protected areas, which will increase the proportion of protected areas in Québec from 2.9% to 4.8%. This means that all activities related to mining, forestry operations and energy production will be prohibited on such territory, and only current hunting, fishing, outdoor and resort activities and aboriginal peoples' traditional and ancestral practices currently being carried out will be allowed. The Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE), Québec's public environmental hearings board, in conjunction with the regional development councils, will hold public consultations concerning the designated territories (11 tracts of land are slated to become protected areas in the boreal forest of the Côte-Nord region), in order to involve the groups concerned, including several partner aboriginal communities. In 1990, Québec had 153 protected areas covering a total of 6 576 km². By July 2002, it had over 1 100 protected areas covering 80 832 km².

At the same time, the government is working with landowners and conservation agencies in order to preserve natural environments on privately owned land. These areas are devoted mainly to the protection of wildlife habitats, although some of them are ecological reserves. They also include Québec's network of national parks.

There is also growing interest among regional and local authorities in the preservation of natural environments. Urban communities, regional county municipalities and local municipalities have the legal means to establish parks and set aside portions of their territory, in conjunction with development plans and planning programs, for the protection of nature. The municipalities own a number of tourist and conservation parks. To date, conservation measures have been applied, above all, in inhabited or developed areas, many of them along the St. Lawrence River.



Tourisme Québec, Heiko Wirrenborn

In 2005, protected areas should represent 8% of Québec's territory.

Air

The Québec government is pursuing initiatives to ensure air quality and help solve cross-border and worldwide airborne pollution problems. Québec is participating in the elaboration and implementation within its territory of international and Canadian agreements covering climatic change, the depletion of the ozone layer, acid rain, smog and toxic substances such as mercury, while adopting an intervention strategy or an action plan in respect of each problem. Consequently, in addition to seeing to local concerns, Québec is involved in global issues that demand very close international collaboration and cooperation.

In Québec, air pollution is generally associated with industrial and commercial operations and the use of fuel, especially in the transportation sector. However, thanks to hydroelectric power, Québec's environmental performance in terms of airborne emissions is enviable.

The reduction observed between 1974 and 1994 in emissions of conventional contaminants, i.e. sulphur dioxide (SO₂), particulate matter, carbon monoxide (CO) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x), has generally led to an improvement in the quality of the ambient air, although further progress in this respect is still deemed necessary.

Québec greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions stem primarily from the use of fossil fuels in the transportation and industrial sectors, which, in 1999, accounted for 39% and 32%, respectively, of such emissions. The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions poses a major challenge for Québec, given that a number of the most profitable energy substitutions have already been made.

In 1992, Québec adhered by order in council to the objective and principles of the *United Nations Framework Agreement on Climatic Change*. Moreover, it joined in international efforts by submitting in 1995 an action plan to implement the Agreement in Québec. In 1999, it introduced a consultation procedure respecting climatic change, the first result of which was the *Québec Action Plan on Climate Change 2000-2002*. This action plan, centred on sustainable development and the precaution principle, marks the first step in the fight against climatic change, which must be pursued for several years, indeed, for several decades.

Among the measures stipulated in the plan, mention should be made of the ÉcoGEsté program (registration of voluntary emission-reduction measures), substantial investment in public transportation, a program to reduce emissions in public buildings, a program to bolster the energy efficiency of the government vehicle fleet by 20%, land use planning aimed at curtailing urban sprawl, control over the use of refrigerant gases to cut down emissions thereof, and the development of renewable energies, including the development of wind power, and further development of Québec's hydroelectric potential in order to satisfy market demand.

Québec recently reiterated its commitment to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, both at Canada-wide ministerial meetings and at international conferences, including those held in Bonn in July 2001 and in Marrakech in November 2001. Québec is negotiating a bilateral agreement with the federal government respecting reduction measures to be implemented in its territory. It certainly intends to continue lobbying its Canadian partners so that Canada ratifies the Kyoto Protocol.

Integrated water management

Water is a source of life. In Québec, it is also a source of collective well-being and pride. It is a valuable, important asset for Québec, which boasts 3% of the world's renewable fresh-water reserves. Its importance notwithstanding, it is neither inalterable nor inexhaustible.

Québec initiatives and commitments to control harmful airborne emissions

A reduction in emissions that cause acidification

SO₂ is deemed to be the main contaminant in acidification. Québec has, by various means, reduced its SO₂ emissions by 65%. However, this reduction alone is insufficient to recover all of the resources affected by acidification, the cause of which (acid-forming emissions) is essentially continental (eastern North America). Québec is seeking to reach an agreement with the other provinces in eastern Canada to pursue emission reductions, especially of SO₂, and to urge the federal government to negotiate additional reductions by the United States.

Québec strategy respecting ozone-depleting substances

In June 1993, Québec adopted the *Regulation respecting ozone-depleting substances*, whose main objective is to reduce airborne emissions of such substances. The application of this regulation has significantly reduced

emissions. In order to update its initiative, in 2000 the government adopted a new integrated strategy covering climate change and ozone layer depletion. In particular, the strategy stipulates that Québec will not seek to replace ozone-depleting substances by greenhouse gases when alternatives are available.

Mercury Action Plan

In 1998, Québec endorsed the ratification by the federal government of the *Protocol on Heavy Metals* adopted by the UN Economic Commission for Europe. Moreover, Québec has undertaken to participate in the implementation of the *North American Regional Action Plan on Mercury*, whose objective is to eliminate the disposal of man-made mercury in the environment. The action plan is intended, in particular, to reduce airborne mercury emissions from sources such as incinerators, coal-fired thermal power plants, and non-ferrous metal smelting works.

In a number of regions, residents are increasingly using water for recreational purposes, at a time when existing demand is growing steadily in respect of farming, industrial production, energy generation, and drinking water supply. This may lead to numerous conflicts with regard to water use.

The Québec government has taken steps that will lead to the adoption of a province-wide water policy. An extensive public consultation carried out in 1999 enabled the government to obtain a clearer picture of water-related problems, clarify the main issues in this respect, and observe growing concern over the protection of water and the water shortages anticipated in a number of countries. Following the consultation, the Québec government adopted in June 2000 a general framework indicating the principles and objectives of its future water policy. Moreover, the ministère de l'Environnement has been mandated to elaborate a province-wide water policy, in collaboration with the government departments involved in water management. Through this policy, the government is seeking to sustain this collective resource and protect human health and ecosystems.

Québec recently reached a turning point in the sound management of its water. In June 2001, a new *Regulation respecting the quality of drinking water* established some of the safest standards in North America and put Québec at the forefront with regard to the quality control of drinking water.

The signing by Québec in June 2001 of the *Annex to the Great Lakes Charter*, which binds the premiers of Québec and Ontario and the governors of the eight American states bordering the Great Lakes, is another noteworthy step in the process of protecting, restoring and managing the waters of the Great Lakes Basin and the St. Lawrence River.

Other key stages in the formulation of the future province-wide water policy have been completed, including the implementation of watershed management. Nearly \$500 000 in financial assistance is supporting some 20 agencies that are already implementing this approach, which Québec regards as the ideal way to manage water in the future. Thirty watersheds requiring priority monitoring have been pinpointed.

Nearly 80% of Quebecers rely for drinking water on surface water, and 20% on groundwater. Québec adopted a regulation respecting drinking water in 1984 and since then, over 2 000 water distribution system operators have been analysing water quality regularly. The regulation respecting groundwater catchment is intended to protect this source of drinking water.

Water purification is a key municipal responsibility and is recognized as being essential to the viability of Québec's urban centres.

During the 1980s, the Québec government launched an extensive municipal wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure construction program, which ended in 2000. Between 1993 and 1999, water purification advanced steadily and the number of treatment plants rose from 328 to 561. By 1999, 97% of Quebecers whose homes were connected to a sewer system benefited from this service.

Principles underlying Québec's water management policy

Water is part of Québec society's heritage.

The protection, restoration and development of water demand a commitment from society as a whole.

The precaution principle must guide society's initiatives in respect of water.

Each Quebecer must have access to quality, affordable drinking water.

Users must be accountable for the use and deterioration of water, according to the user-payer, polluter-payer approach.

Water must be managed sustainably with a view to efficiency, fairness and openness.

The acquisition and dissemination of information on the state of water and on the pressures to which it is subject are an essential component of integrated water management.

St. Lawrence Vision 2000

In 1988, the federal and Québec governments launched the *St. Lawrence River Action Plan*, subsequently dubbed St. Lawrence Vision 2000, now in its third five-year phase. Through the plan, measurable results have been achieved with respect to the reduction of toxic substances, the maintenance of biodiversity, and participation by local communities.

Phase I focused primarily on familiarization with and the protection, preservation and restoration of the environment. Phase II was devoted to pollution prevention, preservation of the river ecosystem, the maintenance of biodiversity, the involvement of local communities, and agricultural pollution. Phase III, which will end in March 2003, is centred, by and large, on protecting ecosystems and human health, involving riverside communities from the standpoint of the accessibility and restoration of the uses to which the St. Lawrence River is put, and reducing agricultural pollution.

Since 1988, over 100 major enterprises have considerably reduced their toxic discharges, which has led to a significant improvement in water quality. Over 12 000 hectares of wildlife habitat have been protected along the riverbanks. During Phase II, the provincial and federal governments, in collaboration with regional agencies, set up the Priority Intervention Zone (ZIP) program.

The ZIP program promotes better knowledge of the river environment with a view to fostering local protection, restoration, conservation and development initiatives in respect of the uses and resources of the St. Lawrence River. The committees formed encourage cooperation between riverside communities and oversee the establishment of local priorities. Each ZIP committee subsequently elaborates an *Ecological Rehabilitation Action Plan* (ERAP). Fourteen ZIP committees that assemble over 2 000 individuals have been set up.

The design of purification facilities is based on environmental discharge objectives, which take into account the receiving environment's ability to dilute such discharges, and quality criteria respecting the uses to be protected or restored. The level of treatment demanded usually conforms to the protection of aquatic ecosystems. Overall, water purification initiatives have significantly reduced the urban pollutant load and made it possible to restore various uses for aquatic environments.

Soil

Québec, like all modern Western societies, has fallen prey to soil contamination stemming from industrial development and has contaminated sites, especially in urban areas. This situation is all the more worrisome in that most of the sites, often located in city centres, could be reused advantageously for other purposes. In 1996, a survey was conducted of all contaminated sites in Québec and a data-management system pertaining to these sites was implemented in all regions. The *Soil Protection and Contaminated Sites Rehabilitation Policy*, revised and expanded in 1998, makes provision for a series of measures geared to the attainment of objectives concerning the prevention of contamination and site rehabilitation. An urban contaminated sites rehabilitation program (Revi-Sols) was established and should generate substantial economic spinoffs while fostering technological innovation in the realm of environmental decontamination.

Forest resources

Forests help conserve soil and water and preserve plants and animals. They help maintain biological diversity, purify the air and maintain climatic balance.

The size of forested areas, the economic importance of forest products, and tourism and recreational activities that take place in such areas mean that forests are of paramount importance in southern Québec. Commercial forests cover 310 000 km², just under one-quarter of Québec's total land area (1.4 million km²).

Abundant forest resources have made the Québec forest industry a driving force in the economy. In 2000, timber shipments totalled \$2.4 billion and shipments of processed products reached \$19.6 billion, i.e. \$7.1 billion in respect of wood products and \$12.5 billion in respect of paper products. In the same year, forest-related operations provided 92 100 direct jobs, equivalent to 16.9% of all manufacturing sector jobs, and 65 400 indirect jobs. Exports totalled \$12.3 billion and generated a \$10.6-billion trade surplus.

In addition to forest management and logging operations, growing numbers of Quebecers are turning to forests for recreational purposes. In 2001, approximately 5 million Quebecers took part in recreational activities in forested areas. The Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec (Québec's wildlife and parks agency) estimates that spending on such activities reached roughly \$3.2 billion in 1999. Such activities made it possible to maintain 30 710 jobs that generated a \$756.2-million payroll. Québec has 22 parks, 22 wildlife preserves, 85 controlled harvesting zones, and 700 outfitters offering accommodation to users.

In 2001, the adoption of the *Act to amend the Forest Act and other legislative provisions* updated the Québec forest management scheme, already one of the most progressive in the world. It enhances practices pertaining to public participation, the cohabitation of various forest users, and the protection of forests.

In addition to maintaining provisions in the 1986 *Forest Act*, centred on the principles of sustainable forest management, the updated legislation introduces the notion of the co-responsibility of holders of timber supply and forest management agreements by instituting a joint assessment of their performance in terms of forest operations and the environment. It also makes provision for the adoption of a policy respecting increased yields, and many other measures.

The adoption of the new statute will ensure that future generations enjoy productive, healthy forests, which will continue to play a decisive role in the socio-economic development of regional communities.

The revision of the Québec forest management scheme began in 1996 with a review of forest management since the application of the *Forest Act* in 1986. In order to better ascertain the nature and scope of needs, the ministère des Ressources naturelles

(Québec's department of natural resources) engaged in a vast public consultation in all regions of Québec. Over 500 briefs containing hundreds of recommendations formulated by Quebecers from all horizons were submitted to the government during public hearings, and a parliamentary commission was formed.

The government regards sustainable forest development as a key issue. Through the sustainable management of its forests, Québec will be able to respond to increasingly pressing demands for environmental protection, the preservation of biodiversity and the maintenance of the attendant capacity for economic and social development.

Agricultural resources

Only 2.5 million hectares of land in Québec are suited to agriculture, equivalent to barely 2% of its territory. Agriculture is contributing appreciably to the development and maintenance of the vitality of rural communities, and makes a decisive economic and social contribution in many areas. An estimated 85% of basic farm products are processed in Québec before being distributed on domestic and external markets. In 13 of Québec's 17 administrative regions, overall farming and food-processing operations account for over 10% of all jobs in the region. In Québec as a whole, the biofood sector (agriculture, processing and distribution) provides nearly one job in eight, or 12% of all available employment.

Québec has over 33 000 farms and agriculture is the main activity in the primary sector. In 2001, Québec farms generated revenues of \$5.7 billion. While farming in Québec is diversified, sales of animal products account for roughly 70% of farm revenues. Dairy and hog production alone account for nearly 49% of all Québec farming operations. Most farms are small and medium-sized family-run operations. Cooperatives carry out over 30% of food processing.



Agriculture contributes significantly to the development of rural Québec.

MAPAQ -- Marc Lajoie

Québec's agriculture sector is open to the world and exports its products to over 150 countries. In 2001, agrifood exports totalled nearly \$3 billion. The United States accounts for 74% of the total, making it Québec's best customer, while Japan ranks second, with nearly 7% of foreign shipments. The other countries share just under 20% of Québec exports.

Thanks to the numerous initiatives undertaken over the past 10 or so years, Québec is in a better position to ensure the sustainable development of its agricultural sector. Between 1988 and 2001, the government invested nearly \$300 million to attain agricultural pollution reduction targets. This assistance focused mainly on the reduction of point-source pollution, since 85% of the support was earmarked for manure storage. The remaining funds were allocated to combat non-point-source pollution, especially through agroenvironmental clubs.

Mining resources

Québec has diversified, abundant mineral potential, which facilitates prospecting and mining. Mineral shipments in 2000 totalled \$2.5 billion (a figure that has remained fairly stable since 1994), making Québec an important production centre. The same year, Québec's mining-related GDP stood at roughly \$1.26 billion, or nearly 0.7%. Moreover, mining shipments outside Canada in 2000 reached \$850 million and the Québec mining industry employed roughly 12 000 workers (person-years) in specialized jobs paying fairly high wages. The average wage paid in the industry in 2000 was estimated at approximately \$50 000.

Over the past 10 or so years, the Québec mining industry has begun shifting to sustainable development by complying with increasingly stringent environmental standards. Between 1990 and 2000, the industry invested roughly \$100 million to enhance the safety of inactive mining sites, restore mine tailings sites, dismantle buildings, decontaminate soil, and revegetate land.

In the realm of improved mining practices, mention should be made of acid drainage. Water flowing from waste rock piles or tailings sites containing sulphur is collected, sent to treatment units, and then discharged into the environment once it satisfies Québec government compliance criteria. Research findings now make it possible to control acid drainage from mining and even to make use of the sulphur. Cyanide-containing mine tailings can be treated in different ways to lower concentrations to an environmentally safe level. All tailings sites are now subject to more extensive monitoring and inspection with a view to preventing the rupturing of dikes and the discharge of tailings into the environment.

Improved mining practices have also led to considerable progress as regards the environmental compliance of mining effluent. Effluent monitoring over the past 10 years reveals steady improvement. The overall compliance rate for all mining sectors (precious metals, base metals, ferrous metals and industrial minerals) rose from 87% to 99% between 1989 and 1994, and has since remained at 99%.

It should also be noted that the Québec government and the mining industry have established wildlife habitats on reclaimed mining sites. In particular, former mine workings are being used as hibernation habitats by bats and wetlands have been developed as waterfowl habitats.

The Québec government has also collaborated with the mining industry in order to establish a number of regional prospecting funds, in partnership with regional and aboriginal communities. This initiative has contributed significantly to the development of local and aboriginal entrepreneurship.

Over the past decade, against a backdrop of globalization and stiffer competition, Québec mine operators have had to bolster productivity and, among other things, rely extensively on technological innovation, which has enhanced not only mining methods, processing and environmental impact management, but also worker health and safety. One example is the establishment in 1999 by 12 mining companies and the Québec government of the COREM research consortium to improve ore-processing methods.

Energy resources

Over the past 20 years Québec has sought to make better use of energy. Between 1979 and 1999, it reduced by 29% its energy consumption per thousand dollars of output. Despite this achievement and even though it continues to perform well in this respect in relation to the rest of Canada and the United States, Québec is one of the regions of the world with the highest per capita energy consumption, due to its energy-intensive industrial structure, harsh climate and the size of its territory. Québec's per capita energy consumption (4.72 TOE in 1998 and 4.79 TOE in 1999) is exceeded only by that of Canada (5.58 TOE in 1999) and the United States (4.99 TOE in 1998). It is almost twice the figure for the European Union (2.55 TOE in 1998).

In 2000, gross domestic product stemming from energy operations stood at \$8.2 billion, equivalent to 4.3% of Québec GDP. Electricity alone accounts for \$7.1 billion of GDP. Since Québec imports oil and natural gas, they contribute much less (\$1.2 billion) to GDP.

In 1999, oil accounted for 41.7% of Québec's energy balance, electricity for 41.4%, natural gas for 15.7%, and coal for 1.1%.

Its abundant hydroelectric resources make Québec a major generator and exporter of electricity. Each terawatt-hour (TWh) of electricity generated in Québec produces 18.5 times less CO₂, 11.7 times less SO₂ and 15 times less NO_x than one TWh generated by electrical utilities in the neighbouring provinces and states, where most electricity is generated using fossil fuels. Consequently, Québec's net hydroelectric power exports are reducing the polluting emissions of neighbouring power producers,

thus mitigating climate change, acid rain and smog. As for CO₂, the total emissions avoided through Québec hydroelectric power exports can reach up to 20 million tonnes a year, equivalent to the annual emissions of roughly 6 million automobiles.

Recourse to hydroelectricity does, however, affect the environment, through the formation of methyl mercury in reservoirs and the transformation of terrestrial ecosystems into aquatic ecosystems.

At the same time, an effort is being made to broaden scientific and technical knowledge and to develop new technologies to produce and use energy resources. Research and development in the realm of renewable energies is focusing, in particular, on:

- agricultural, forest and urban biomass energy conversion and biogas recovery;
- the development of wind power;
- the development of hydrogen technologies.

Health and sustainable development

In the realm of environmental health, it is imperative that the principles of sustainable development underpin the prevention of health problems stemming from long-term environmental degradation. This includes not only public health risks attributable to hot spots involving toxic substances, but also risks inherent to the undermining of the earth's natural systems, e.g. climate change, agricultural pollution, and so on.

Climate change and public health

Climate change raises for Québec the question of public health. The body of knowledge is growing on the links between these worldwide changes and human health, including a higher incidence of infectious diseases, physical or psychological health problems caused by drought, flooding and storms, not to mention the consequences of the thinning of the ozone layer, a related problem that is leading to increased exposure to carcinogenic ultraviolet rays.

Health risks arising from agricultural pollution

Agricultural pollution of animal origin is raising legitimate public concern about the human health risks associated with it. Such pollution produces excessive pathogenic microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses and parasites, chemical substances such as nitrate, phosphorus and pesticides, and organic matter in some surface water. A scientific report on the topic of health risks associated with livestock breeding in Québec was produced in 2000 and includes recommendations aimed specifically at preventing the contamination of drinking water. The government is seeking to strike a balance between the development of the agrifood industry and the protection of public health in Québec, in keeping with the principles of sustainable development.

In June 2002, the government announced the adoption of the new *Regulation respecting agricultural operations*, which makes it possible to tackle the problem of non-point-source pollution head-on, i.e. on each farm, by seeking to balance phosphorus in the soil. When new farming operations are established or when livestock herds increase, such balance must be achieved immediately. In the case of existing operations, the objective of balanced soil must be attained in 2010, with an intermediate objective of 50% by 2005. This new approach to phosphorus management takes into account the agronomic needs of plants in order to grow and reflects the real calculation of animal excrement on a farm-by-farm basis, rather than using mean regional values. Each farm must have sufficient land on which to spread its manure or take the necessary steps to compensate when it has insufficient land.

The government has also imposed a moratorium on new hog farms in Québec, which will last for two years in the case of the 281 municipalities that are grappling with the problem of surplus manure. Elsewhere in Québec, the moratorium will last 18 months. Given the urgency of taking action, the government is limiting the expansion of hog farms not only in the watersheds hardest hit by surplus manure but also in all regions of Québec. The moratorium will make it possible to conduct a thorough survey of phosphorus content and adopt modern, effective control measures.

Effects of electromagnetic fields on health

In order to reach a consensus on the effects of electromagnetic fields, particularly those stemming from high tension power lines, the Québec government directed an expert team to review available scientific data and make recommendations, where necessary, for the prudent management of human exposure to such fields.

The team's report, tabled in May 2000, underscored a lack of scientific certainty in the causal relationship between electromagnetic fields and cancer. However, a small risk of leukemia in children does exist. As a result, Québec is developing a policy for the prudent management of exposure to electromagnetic fields from high tension power lines, which is predicated on the precautionary principle.

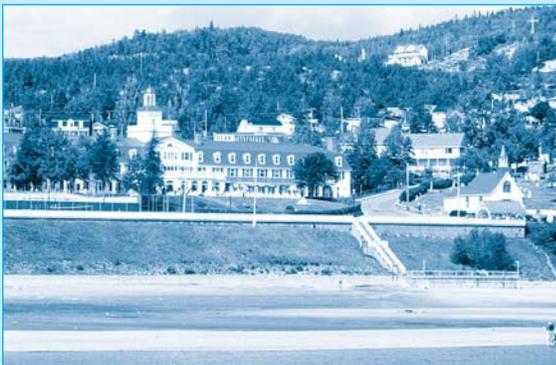
Risks stemming from industrial development

The Québec government is responsible for assessing the toxicological threat posed to human health by the environmental impact of major industrial projects. Such risk assessment is a modern approach to ensuring that the principles of sustainable development are applied with a view to protecting both human health and the environment.

Healthy communities

The Healthy Cities movement fosters cooperation between municipal services and community agencies by taking advantage of the resources of the health and education networks, labour, community groups and individuals.

The movement's initiatives reflect the notion that the municipalities are the level of government closest to the population and perhaps the most significant with respect to public health. It allows the public to participate actively in collective well-being and to influence decisions that affect the quality of life. The movement also enables the municipalities to play a leadership role in terms of community dynamics, while encouraging them to consider health and quality of life in all of their initiatives. In a word, the initiatives launched by this Québec movement are examples of measures that make it possible to revitalize neighbourhoods and enhance living environments and conditions, especially those of the most vulnerable members of society. Over 140 municipalities, representing 50% of Québec's population, have adhered to the movement.



Tadoussac, a resort town on the northern shore of the St. Lawrence.

Better adapted governance

In June 1997, the UN General Assembly raised the question of government in the following manner: “Democracy, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society, and effective participation by civil society are also an essential part of the necessary foundations for the realization of social and people centred sustainable development.”

Québec encourages individuals to participate in democracy, as such participation promotes human solidarity.

Québec is a democratic society centred on freedom, equality and participation by individuals and civil society.

A society based on the rule of law

Québec is a profoundly democratic, modern society governed by a legal order that establishes the framework in which individuals, groups and governments conduct themselves, the relationships between them, and that defines their duties and rights. This legal order, based on the fundamental principles of law, confirms the existence of legislative power, executive power and independent judicial power.

Québec applies civil law, unlike the rest of Canada, where common law prevails.

The equality of the sexes

Québec society is one of the progressive nations from the standpoint of the equality of women and men. It has made considerable progress in recent decades, in such a way that women have more fully assumed their role as genuine partners in development.

The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, gave a new impetus the world over to the need for states to adopt measures designed to ensure respect for the basic human rights of women and, in particular, the right to equality, i.e. equal civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, equal obligations for women and men, equal value and dignity as human beings, and equal opportunity in life choices. The principle of equality between women

and men, to which Québec society adheres, is giving rise to a constantly changing power-sharing formula in the conduct of public affairs. The recognition of equality also implies respect for differences, since equality is not synonymous with identity or similarity, but with equivalence.

Respect for the principle of equality has served as a guideline for government initiatives since 1997. In 2000, Québec adopted a new action program for the period 2000 to 2003 entitled Equality for All Women of Québec, which seeks to enforce this principle through the establishment of equal social, cultural, economic, legal and political conditions for women and men.

The history and determination of all Quebecers have made possible the maintenance of a society in which power is exercised democratically and where the rule of law takes precedence over force.

The government and local and regional authorities are free to exercise political choices that Quebecers may approve or reject through consultations, referendums and elections, or by any other legitimate means. To foster the political equality of its citizens, Québec has adopted legislation governing the financing of political parties that prohibits legal entities (public or private corporations) from contributing to the financing of political parties and caps contributions made by individuals.

Regardless of the political choices made, they are subject to legality, which means that the adoption of legislation, the enactment of regulations and the formulation of administrative decisions must comply with a legal framework, and that the courts are empowered to ensure adherence to this principle.

Similarly, the relationship between the State and citizens and the exercising of each one's rights in relation to the other are subject to rules and procedures that seek to ensure fairness, openness and impartial treatment by a competent judicial and administrative system.

To ensure that Quebecers are aware of the law that governs them, the texts of legislation, regulations and all other applicable rules are readily accessible and extensively publicized in their full or summarized versions or via other information on their contents.

Active participation by young people

There is growing recognition of the importance of making policy and decision-making bodies accessible to young people. In February 2000, the Québec Youth Summit assembled young people and key partners from various sectors of society to focus on four major issues, i.e. meeting the challenges of employment, broadening knowledge and furthering training, displaying openness to the world, and promoting a fair society. At the conclusion of their deliberations, the participants adopted eight leading priorities and established a consensus on 40 measures aimed at achieving them. The priorities are listed below:

- make education a central priority in society;
- foster full participation by all young people in the life of society;
- provide preparation for life and employment;
- develop a preventive approach and assess its impact;
- pursue the fight against exclusion and discrimination;
- promote intergenerational equity;
- promote openness to the world;
- guarantee sustainable development and access to a quality environment in Québec today and for future generations.



Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'immigration

Young people ready to take up the challenges of tomorrow.

The government and its partners have implemented nearly 90 measures stemming from the consensus reached at the Summit.

Commitments made in respect of knowledge and training include substantial investment in the education system, the preparation by each educational institution of academic achievement plans, and the launching of a province-wide educational promotion plan. The measures are aimed at ensuring that all young people become qualified in light of their individual choices and potential. As for employment, the government plans to hire several thousand young people in the public and parapublic sectors in the coming years. Moreover, it hires numerous students during the summer in addition to offering some of them training sessions when they complete their studies.

Permanent youth forums, whose members are between 15 and 30 years of age, have been set up in all regions of Québec to encourage young people to participate in democratic life. Other young people from various regional organizations elect the members, whose mission is to promote the representation of young people within local, regional and provincial bodies, ensure cooperation between youth representatives in the regions and regional partners, act in an advisory capacity with regard to youth issues on regional development councils, and collaborate in the management of the Fonds Jeunesse Québec (Québec youth fund).

Québec is promoting a fairer society that is open to the world and mindful of guaranteeing its young people a better future. In the wake of this initiative, participants in the Summit approved the establishment of the Québec youth fund, specifically devoted to funding projects aimed at the social, community, cultural and occupational integration of young people.

The notion of openness to the world is taking concrete form, in particular, through the establishment of international trainee programs and the Office Québec-Amérique pour la jeunesse (a Québec-America youth organization).

Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms

The *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, adopted by the Québec National Assembly in 1975, indicates the basic values of Québec society. It defines the right to equality, prohibits all forms of discrimination and guarantees the basic political, legal and social rights that Quebecers enjoy.

The Charter explicitly recognizes that a person possesses certain freedoms and basic rights that even the State may not restrict except by legislation, whose reasonable nature it may have to justify before the courts.

The Charter confirms the following human rights and freedoms:

- the right to life, integrity and freedom;
- freedom of conscience, religion, opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association;
- the right to the safeguard of the person's dignity, honour and reputation;
- the right to respect for the person's private life;
- the right to the peaceful enjoyment and free disposition of the person's property;
- the right to the inviolability of the person's home;
- the right to professional secrecy.

Economic and social rights are also protected and focus, in particular, on:

- the right to security of children;
- the right to free public education;
- the right of persons belonging to ethnic minorities to maintain and develop their own cultural interests;
- the right to information;
- the right for persons in need to measures of financial assistance;
- the right to fair and reasonable conditions of employment;
- the right of spouses to equality in marriage;
- the right of aged persons and disabled persons to protection against any form of exploitation.

The Québec Charter also protects the right to vote and the right to stand for election, as well as legal rights.

Participation in civil society

Québec is aware that sustainable development requires the participation of all major groups in society, i.e. women, young people, the aboriginal peoples and their communities, non-governmental organizations, local communities, workers and labour unions, the commerce and industry sectors, the scientific and technical community, and farmers.

Québec is, therefore, promoting the mobilization of and partnership with these major groups through the regional development councils. As for participation by women, Québec believes that broader empowerment of local and regional bodies cannot be achieved democratically unless women's vitality and collaborative and planning abilities are equitably called into play in relation to those of men.

Local governance

The Québec government recognizes the key role played by local communities in social, economic and cultural development.

The sweeping economic, social and demographic changes that Québec is facing demand greater solidarity in municipal governance and the strengthening of the capacity of local communities to face these new challenges. With the unveiling in April 2000 of its white paper on municipal reorganization, *Changing Our Ways to Better Serve the Public*, the Québec government initiated a vast reform aimed at consolidating local communities and reinforcing Québec's main urban centres. Among other things, the reform seeks to ensure that the municipalities afford communities an opportunity to adopt a common vision and strategies that most efficiently incorporate environmental protection into development processes, reduce unfairness by pooling resources, and guarantee public participation. The reform has focused on three components: municipal amalgamation, the strengthening of regional county municipalities, and the establishment of metropolitan communities.

Public participation: the importance of democratic values

In order to protect residents' feeling of belonging to their immediate community, the territories of the new cities of Montréal, Québec City, Longueuil, Saguenay, Sherbrooke and Lévis have been divided into boroughs, each with an elected council. The boroughs are much more than simple administrative divisions in the new cities in that they are democratic bodies that represent residents and play a consultative and decision-making role. They are also primarily responsible for the delivery of community services. The residents of the new cities are able to influence those decisions that will affect them the most directly in their daily lives and confidently develop a feeling of belonging to the borough.

The three components of the municipal reform

Municipal amalgamation: public solidarity and the pooling of local resources

To enhance the financial and administrative capability of the municipalities, ensure optimum use of community and government resources and better apportion resources and costs in communities, the government has, since 1996, advocated the amalgamation of over 400 municipalities whose territories make up one of the 179 natural communities or centres with populations of under 10 000. To date, over half of these municipalities have amalgamated to form 80 new municipalities.

Major municipal amalgamations have also occurred in the territory of the largest urban centres. In 12 of the 26 population centres with fewer than 100 000 inhabitants, a new larger municipality has been formed from the territory of 64 former municipalities. In the six urban centres with populations of over 100 000, eight new cities have replaced 85 former municipalities and rank among Québec's nine largest municipalities.

The strengthening of regional county municipalities: solidarity between local communities concerned with common issues

A growing number of issues such as economic development and environmental protection cannot be adequately dealt with at the local level since they go beyond the territories of the local municipalities, even when amalgamated. The fields of jurisdiction of the regional county municipalities (RCMs), which are upper-tier municipal institutions, have been broadened over the past 10 years. New powers have been attributed to them with respect to

the environment and public security and the government has provided financial support to help them assume these new responsibilities. An RCM's ability to assume fields of jurisdiction previously exercised by local municipalities has been enhanced. In light of the diversity of the territories, measures have also been adopted or proposed to allow each RCM to ascertain its specific priorities and foster innovative solutions. For example, rural RCMs may decide to elect their warden by universal suffrage instead of choosing from among the mayors of local municipalities.

The establishment of metropolitan communities: taking advantage of the strength of major urban centres

Nearly 60% of Quebecers (over 4 million inhabitants) live in the Montréal and Québec City metropolitan areas, where the integration of environmental protection into the development process and attempts to achieve social equity imply challenges specific to large urban centres. To meet these challenges, the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal and the Communauté métropolitaine de Québec were established in January 2001 and January 2002, respectively. These metropolitan communities are assuming a vital role with regard to land use planning and development, metropolitan mass transit guidelines, and economic and social development planning. In particular, they are responsible for elaborating a metropolitan land use and development plan, which presents a strategic vision of economic, social and environmental development. The communities concerned must also stipulate in the plans the criteria applicable, in particular, to urbanization and the protection of natural resources.

Land use planning and development, a joint responsibility

Just over 20 years ago, the *Act respecting land use planning and development* established the frame of reference that defines the roles, responsibilities and obligations of the government, regional county municipalities (RCMs) and local municipalities in the realm of land use planning and development. During the 1980s, the RCMs elaborated development plans in respect of their territories, at which time the government, its departments and mandataries determined their guidelines pertaining to land use planning and development. A procedure was adopted to ensure that RCM development plans comply with government guidelines and initiatives in respect of the territory. In each RCM, the local municipalities subsequently adopted planning programs, followed by zoning, subdivision and construction by-laws that comply with the development plan.

Throughout the elaboration, modification or revision of the development plan and of the attendant urban planning tools, the process established by the legislation assumes a contribution by 20 or so government departments and agencies, as well as participation by and the involvement of associations, community groups, economic interest groups and individuals, through various information and consultation procedures. The main objectives are to strike a balance between individuals and interest groups and ensure the harmonization and compatibility of activities in the territory as a whole. The development plan is a community project in respect of land use planning and development and the measures to be adopted in the realms of economic, social, environmental and cultural development.

An ongoing process

The 1990s were noteworthy in that the RCMs undertook the revision of their development plans, with the result that the government adopted in 1994 new policy directions governing land use planning and development. The government indicated that the integration of the concept of sustainable development into the management of the territory and decisions concerning land use and resource development pose genuine challenges for itself and its partners and require a concerted effort by all those involved. For example, several government commitments are aimed at reconciling economic and industrial activities with respect for the environment, striking a balance between the satisfaction of social or economic needs and the maintenance of an acceptable living environment, and developing and using the territory without causing, more or less in the long term, a shortage of space or exhausting resources. In early 2002, 23 of the 87 RCMs had implemented revised development plans.

To take into account issues specific to the Montréal metropolitan core, the government adopted in June 2001 the *Cadre d'aménagement et d'orientations gouvernementales 2001-2021 de la région métropolitaine de Montréal*, a framework document stipulating the government's expectations and commitments that the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal must bear in mind in the metropolitan land use and development plan that it is elaborating. These expectations and commitments are firmly centred on the principles of sustainable development, i.e. environmental protection and biological diversity, fairness between individuals and between generations, and the optimization of measures in keeping with the characteristics and the environmental capacity of ecosystems. The factors pinpointed include the establishment of a habitat that fosters social diversity, the enhancement of the quality of life in old or dilapidated neighbourhoods, planning in respect of public transportation equipment and infrastructure aimed at consolidating existing urban zones and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and the protection and development of the agricultural zone.

In December 2001, the government adopted new policy directions governing the protection of agricultural territory and operations. To ensure a permanent territorial base for ongoing agriculture, the government is asking the RCMs to focus on the consolidation of existing urban zones rather than encroaching on agricultural zones.

Challenges

The revision of the development plans began several years ago, and completion of the process will require sustained effort. The Communauté métropolitaine de Québec and the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal must prepare their first metropolitan land use and development plans, which will express a strategic vision of sustainable development. The metropolitan communities must respect Québec's guidelines spelled out in government development frameworks. In addition, the government must adopt a development framework covering the territory of the Communauté métropolitaine de Québec, which is now being elaborated. It must also introduce support measures and fulfil its commitments to the metropolitan communities. Moreover, the policies, strategies and sectoral initiatives of government departments must be adapted accordingly.

Efforts must be pursued with regard to several land use and planning issues, including the protection of riparian habitats and the littoral zone, land subdivision in light of the presence or absence of water supply and sewage services, and land use determined by the risk of flooding or landslides.

Some issues pertaining to the revision of the development plans will demand close attention. Increasingly, the need to better plan development, counteract urban sprawl and ensure better use of the territory through the revitalization of neighbourhoods, landscape conservation and the preservation of resources and community heritage is being felt. In particular, this will imply investment in the revitalization of urban districts and the protection and development of the agricultural zone. Investment will also be necessary to rehabilitate the public infrastructure in order to ensure greater intergenerational equity and better adapt services to local needs.

Division of responsibilities between the Québec and municipal governments

Sector		Responsibilities	
		Québec	Municipalities
Health and social services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitals • Health care • Social services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	
Social solidarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income security • Public employment services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing improvement • Assistance for social housing • Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary and secondary education • Higher education • Educational child-care services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways and main road network • City streets • Rural routes • Mass transit in urban areas • Lighting of the road network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •
Public protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police • Fire protection • Emergency measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Environment and environmental hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution control • Drinking water quality standards • Water supply • Sanitary and storm sewers • Protection of biodiversity • Wastewater treatment • Residual materials management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • •
Leisure and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries, museums • Exhibitions and fairs • Parks and wilderness areas • Recreational activities, leisure and playgrounds • Cultural property and heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • •
Urbanism and land development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land development and management • Planning program and zoning by-laws • Economic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Local finance and taxation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property assessment • Budget • Borrowing • Procurement of goods and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •

Sustainable development and globalization

Québec maintains an international presence in several ways. In particular, it has signed numerous political, social, cultural, economic, commercial, environmental, scientific and technological agreements. Moreover, it has adhered to several international agreements and pacts.

The Québec government's international relations policy recognizes that Québec's progress is inextricably linked to that of other states, including the developing nations. In this perspective, its relations with other countries reflect a desire to achieve a genuine partnership aimed at fostering joint development and solidarity.

Sustainable development is an objective that transcends geographic boundaries, language barriers and cultural differences. In this respect, Québec believes that it can benefit from the knowledge of other societies that adopt policies and practices different from its own. Sharing foreign experience, broadening its expertise and pinpointing avant-garde practices in the realm of sustainable development are all benefits to be derived from an active presence in the international community.

For example, Québec is one of the partner regions in the group comprising Bavaria, Upper Austria, Québec, Shandong and the Western Cape, five governments of federated states situated on four continents (Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe) with a combined population of 120 million. In 2002, these partner regions adopted two joint declarations, the first one calling for closer cooperation and policies geared to present and future generations and the second one focusing specifically on sustainable development, which recognizes, among other things, the importance of democracy, the eradication of poverty, the enhancement of the quality of life, and the reinforcement of governance.

International aid

Québec has set up an international aid secretariat (SAIQ), which is responsible for inventorying governmental and paragonovernmental international aid initiatives, coordinating the government's international humanitarian aid efforts, ensuring the implementation of the necessary procedures, and managing the International Humanitarian Initiatives Program, the Québec Without Borders program, and a fund that receives joint contributions from Québec's department of international relations and the Québec association of international development organizations.

SAIQ programs in the realm of international aid focus on an array of issues. Its International Humanitarian Initiatives Program provides for the fulfilment of basic needs in education, health, social and community organization, human rights and democracy. The program has an emergency aid component aimed at helping the victims of conflicts, catastrophes and natural disasters.

Selected international agreements and pacts to which Québec adheres

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
(Order in council – April 21, 1976)

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
(Order in council – April 21, 1976)

Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
(Order in council – April 21, 1976)

Déclaration reconnaissant la compétence du Comité des droits de l'Homme pour recevoir et considérer les communications qui lui sont présentées concernant le Québec
(Order in council – November 2, 1978)

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
(Order in council – May 10, 1978)

Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
(Order in council – June 20, 1979)

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
(Order in council – October 20, 1981)

Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
(Order in council – June 10, 1987)

Convention on the Rights of the Child
(Order in council – December 9, 1991)

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
(Order in council – November 25, 1992)

Convention on Biological Diversity
(Order in council – November 25, 1992)

Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution and its protocols
(Order in council – January 22, 1997)

Convention No. 182 Concerning the Prohibition and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor
(Order in council – May 24, 2000)

International educational partnerships

Québec has signed nearly 70 educational agreements with numerous countries and a number of regional and international organizations that support the enhancement of worker training. Exemption and merit scholarships are offered to foreign students.

In addition to this program, various initiatives are aimed specifically at certain French-speaking countries. Seminars and training sessions designed to heighten awareness of various models that Québec has developed in respect of the planning,

organization and management of vocational and technical training have been carried out. A number of exploratory training sessions have been organized to enable managers and experts to become familiar with Québec systems to manage public employment and anti-poverty services.

In 1999, the Québec government implemented a program to internationalize education. The program seeks to make young people receptive to the world, enable them to acquire the competence and skills that globalization demands, encourage language learning, and export Québec know-how in education. Several hundred projects have been carried out under this program in recent years.

Globalization, a complex phenomenon

The finance ministers and governors of the central banks of the G-20 countries who gathered in Montréal in October 2000 described globalization as the growing integration of national economies stemming from the increased mobility of goods, services, people and ideas.

Globalization is perceived as a highly complex phenomenon that impacts on political and social systems and the culture and identity of peoples. In this spirit, participants in the Davos World Economic Forum in 2000 emphasized the need to include a social and ethical dimension in globalization.

The synergistic effect of various driving forces behind globalization has led to greater economic interdependence among nations while conferring a broader role on the multinational enterprises, the financial sector, certain international organizations (WTO, IMF, WB, ILO, OECD, and so on) and the NGOs that represent the viewpoint of growing numbers of people in civil society. This increased interdependence and the greater complexity of relations in turn affect the State, whose decision-making processes are centred primarily at the national level.



Globalization raises legitimate concerns in civil society.

Globalization and social climate

A number of observers question the role of the State in a context of globalization. Some fear that the State will be relegated to a secondary role, while others maintain that, on the contrary, the State actually hampers the efficiency targeted by globalization. An examination of the question clearly reveals the essential but changing role played by the State in maximizing the benefits of globalization and minimizing its drawbacks.

The anxiety that globalization arouses stems in part from the notion that domestic policy is, increasingly, being influenced by international constraints.

Redistribution policies will prove essential to ensure harmonious social and economic development. Such policies foster a better social climate and make it possible to avoid the creation of conflict-ridden situations likely to curb globalization. Consequently, globalization requires an adequate social safety net, respect for cultural diversity, workers' basic rights and labour standards, and social regulation that takes into account a need for adaptability and a need for protection.

The need for a more flexible State and greater autonomy for local and regional decision-makers is obvious. Such flexibility and autonomy seek to draw the decision-making process closer to those who are directly concerned, identify their needs, and coordinate the measures to be adopted.

Implementation of sustainable development

Québec has adopted a number of sector-specific policies and strategies devoted to sustainable development.

When the Brundtland Report was published in 1987, Québec endorsed the concept and objectives of sustainable development. The same year, the ministère de l'Environnement published a report entitled *A new environmental CAP strategy: Conservation - Action - Progress* outlining an initial official commitment to sustainable development, under the heading “Conservation as the basis of lasting development or a new social contract between the environment and progress.”

In 1988, the Québec government was the first in Canada to establish a round table on the environment and the economy. In November 1989, the round table held the first major Québec forum on sustainable development.

In 1991, the government set up an interdepartmental committee on sustainable development, mandated to foster the incorporation of the principles of sustainable development into government policies and programs.

Between 1991 and 1994, Québec's department of the environment and wildlife adopted certain measures to focus its initiatives on sustainable development. The department's guidelines include the following objectives:

- position the department as a leader in the promotion of sustainable development;
- promote sustainable development in other government departments and among Quebecers;
- participate in intergovernmental debates on sustainable development and ensure follow-up to the Rio Earth Summit.

In 1992, Québec adhered to the objectives of the *Convention on Biological Diversity* and, in 1996, it adopted the *Québec Strategy on Biological Diversity* and an action plan in this respect. In 1992, it also adhered to the objectives of the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* and, in 1995, it tabled a five-year action plan followed by the *Québec Action Plan on Climate Change 2000-2002*.

In 1995, the ministère des Ressources naturelles amended the *Mining Act* to compel mine operators to submit a site-restoration plan once mining operations ceased and to deposit a financial guarantee covering 70% of the estimated cost of restoration.

In 1996, the *Forest Act* recognized six criteria governing sustainable forest management.

In 1996, Québec adopted a 1997-2001 government action plan aimed at giving a new impetus to social housing and which relies on partnership and the social economy.

In 1996, at the Summit Conference on the Economy and Employment, the government invited union and employer partners and partner associations to mobilize in light of key objectives such as deficit reduction, the revitalization of employment and the reform of public services. Stakeholders in the social economy joined with other economic partners in order to find solutions to employment problems.

In May 1996, the ÉcoSommet (an ecological summit) concluded a joint initiative in respect of sustainable development in all regions of Québec. Over 750 people from all sectors of society participated in this major event. The ÉcoSommet made it possible to inventory roughly 400 achievements and over 500 sustainable development projects throughout Québec. In 1997, the ÉcoSommet published the results of its initiative in the form of an action plan targeting sustainable development.

In November 1996, the ministère des Ressources naturelles unveiled a new Québec energy policy oriented toward sustainable development. The policy, the outcome of a major public debate on energy, announced, in particular, the establishment of the Régie de l'énergie (energy board) and the Agence de l'efficacité énergétique.

In January 1997, the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (Québec's department of health and social services) established the general drug insurance plan, without which 1.7 million adherents, including 400 000 children, would have no drug insurance coverage.

In 1997, the Québec government played a key role in Kyoto in the adoption of the Canadian greenhouse gas reduction target. In 1998, in keeping with its commitment to reduce greenhouse gases and aware of the need to adapt to new climatic conditions, Québec set up its own climate change process in order to establish a concerted action plan that reflects the characteristics of its territory. The resulting *Québec Action Plan on Climate Change 2000-2002* was made public in the fall of 2000.

In September 1997, the International Conference on the Territorial Application of Sustainable Development (Nikan Conference) was held in Jonquière, on the initiative of the Région laboratoire du développement durable. Nearly 550 participants from 42 countries attended the conference.

In 1998, the Québec government made sustainable development one of the three key policy directions of its economic strategy, which seeks to make Québec one of the top 10 economies in the world from the standpoint of job creation, competitiveness, solidarity and environmental friendliness.

In 1998, the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail was established to elaborate, in collaboration with labour-market partners, guidelines pertaining to public employment services. This commission comprises representatives of businesses, employee organizations, community organizations and the secondary schools and colleges.

In March 1998, in conjunction with the tabling of the 1998-1999 Budget, the ministère des Finances (department of finance) unveiled the Québec government's economic strategy, entitled *Québec: Focus on Jobs*, one chapter of which is devoted to ensuring sustainable development. These commitments are intended to enhance living conditions in Québec, satisfy Quebecers' social needs, preserve the quality of the environment, and maintain the availability of resources, in the fairest possible manner.

In May 1998, Tourisme Québec made public its tourism policy. One of the policy's four main strategic guidelines focuses on broadening cooperation with a view to achieving sustainable, responsible tourism development.

In 2000, the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement completed a vast consultation on water management in Québec. The public consultations on development projects that the BAPE has conducted throughout Québec for several years are helping to heighten public awareness of environmental issues and promote sustainable development. The BAPE is a democratic tool for sustainable development.

In February 2000, a consensus was reached at the Québec Youth Summit aimed at guaranteeing sustainable development and a quality environment in Québec now and in the future.

On March 14, 2000, in his 2000-2001 Budget Speech in the National Assembly, then Québec Finance Minister and current Québec Prime Minister Bernard Landry reaffirmed that sustainable development is a priority component of Québec's economic strategy. He established an action fund for sustainable development, whose \$45-million budget is making possible the realization of hundreds of province-wide and regional sustainable development projects.

In June 2000, Québec submitted to the UN General Assembly the report entitled *Social Development in Québec (1995-2000)*, accompanied by a review of and outlook information on its initiatives to combat poverty and exclusion.

In 2001, sustainable development was one of the measures included in the government's 2001-2003 strategic policy directions.

In 2001, both the *Maritime and Inland Waterway Transport Policy* and the *Québec Youth Policy* recognized the need to bear in mind sustainable development when the policies are implemented. One area of intervention in the *Québec Youth Policy* focuses specifically on the integration of sustainable development practices into the government's and Québec society's modes of operation in order to prepare the upcoming generation.

In 2001, the ministère de l'Éducation adopted a new education program for Québec schools that centres to a large extent on the concept of sustainable development at the preschool and elementary school levels.

In 2001, the ministère des Ressources naturelles reviewed the Québec forest management scheme in order to enhance those facets of it that affect, in particular, public participation and better use of forest resources.

In 2001, the Québec forum on agriculture and agrifood reached a consensus on the reduction of agricultural pollution.

The ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie (Québec's department of research, science and technology) unveiled in 2001 the *Québec Policy on Science and Innovation - Knowledge to Change the World*, aimed at achieving "common prosperity through sustainable development."

In September 2001, the science and technology council made public a brief entitled *Innovation and Sustainable Development: Tomorrow's Economy*, which recommends, among other things, the elaboration and implementation of a framework policy and departmental strategies concerning sustainable development.



Tourisme Québec — René Trudel

Québec City hosted the first World Ecotourism Summit in May 2002.

In 2002, the ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole (Québec's department of municipal affairs and Greater Montréal) adopted a development framework centred on sustainable development in respect of the Greater Montréal area.

In May 2002, Québec City hosted the first World Ecotourism Summit, during which the "Québec City Declaration on Ecotourism" was adopted. The UN has declared 2002 the International Year of Ecotourism. Organized by the

World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Ecotourism Summit is the highlight of this theme year. For many years, the Québec tourism sector has sought to achieve the objectives of sustainable development.

In June 2002, the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux unveiled its action strategy for youngsters in difficulty and their families, a collective undertaking involving civil society and, in particular, groups of young people.

Moreover, in June 2002 the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Greater Montréal, the Environment and Water and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food asked the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement to set up a commission on sustainable development in the realm of hog production in Québec.

In June 2002, the new *Act respecting the Ministère des Relations internationales* was assented to. This legislation seeks to democratize and heighten the openness of the process by which Québec makes international commitments and, in so doing, to better inform Quebecers, especially in the current context of globalization. It enables Québec parliamentarians to debate key international issues. Under the legislation, the National Assembly will play a broader role since it is henceforth responsible for approving or rejecting Québec's international commitments.



The Minister for the Environment and Water, Jean-François Simard, during the National Forum on Sustainable Development, on June 14, 2002 in Québec City.

On June 14, 2002, the ministère de l'Environnement held a province-wide forum on sustainable development, which enabled nearly 200 interveners not only from the environmental sector but also from associations, industry, the unions, the scientific community, the universities and the government to discuss the challenges that sustainable development poses in Québec. The participants came from all over Québec. The forum's reflections are intended to pinpoint a number of principles and initiatives, for example, the importance of stepping up the mobilization, awareness and education of Quebecers with respect to the major objectives

of sustainable development. The government and civil society must share responsibility for attaining these objectives. The participants in the forum hope that existing commitments concerning key issues, especially climate change, water management and soil protection, will lead to concrete measures, and that precise indicators will be used to measure progress in this respect.

In the wake of this array of noteworthy initiatives, the Québec government now wishes to adopt a province-wide framework to guide all of its measures, one that mobilizes the public. In this way, it seeks to send a clear message that sustainable development is a province-wide priority and a public concern. While the government recognizes what has already been accomplished, it regards sustainable development as a collective project.

Québec's perspective

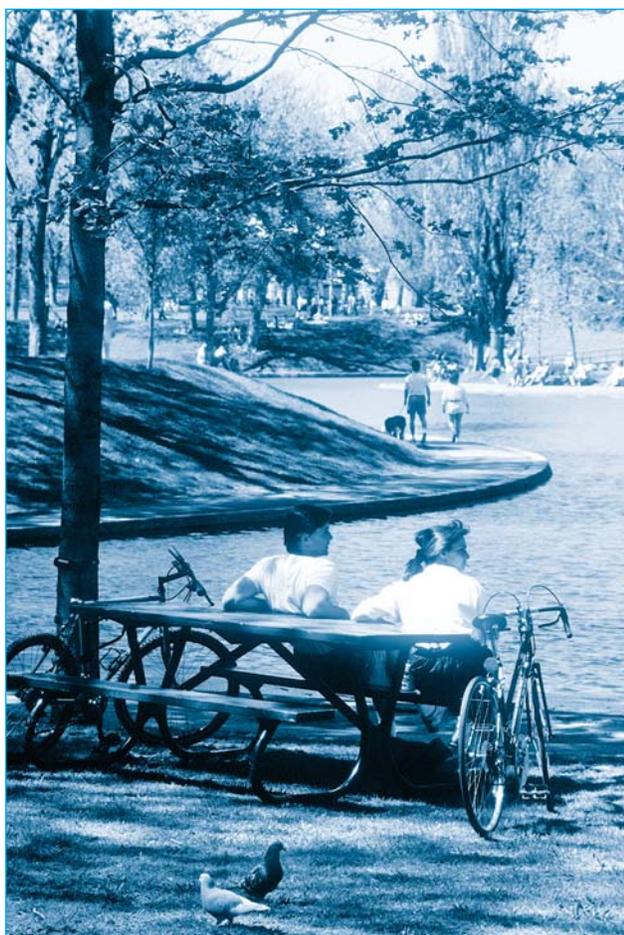
Sustainable development in Québec demands harmony between economic development, ecological sustainability and social fairness, i.e. between those components that ensure the quality of life of the Québec nation.

Current generations have a duty to transmit to future generations a natural, social, economic and cultural heritage that enables them to enjoy the same quality of life. We must, among other things, ensure both economic development and environmental protection.

Sustainable development implies a change in behaviour, modes of production and consumption patterns. Progress that promotes sustainable development requires the support of and participation by the general public, civil society, communities and businesses. This perspective of sustainable development relies on the mobilization of Quebecers and businesses, and on partnership and cooperation in respect of objectives and concrete measures whose progress must be measured.

Québec is seeking to achieve an economy that is at once interdependent and competitive, open to the world and centred on knowledge and innovation, human resources development, ecological efficiency and environmental protection. Québec wishes to be a society that relies on cultural diversity, partnership and, above all, fairness.

Sustainable development is a blueprint for society involving public participation. All things considered, it is a question of ensuring that Québec focuses on the quality of life of human communities.



Tourisme Québec - Robin Edger

Lafontaine Park in Montréal.



Québec 