



**ENOUGH,  
VOTE FOR  
CHANGE!**

**REVIVAL PLAN FOR QUÉBEC**

**COALITION**  
AVENIR QUÉBEC.ORG

This electoral program presents the commitments that will enforce a Coalition Avenir Québec government in the respect of the Balanced Budget Act. These commitments result from the orientations adopted by Coalition Avenir Québec members at the foundation convention held on April 20 and 21, 2012.

In this document, the masculine form is used without discriminatory intention and only in the purpose to make the text lighter.

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# MESSAGE FROM FRANÇOIS LEGAULT

Québec is at an impasse. While the sovereignists and federalists are squabbling, serious problems remain, such as the high number of school dropouts, the fragility of public finances or the inefficiency of our large public health and education networks. Weariness, gloom and cynicism are evident everywhere. The power seems to be in the hands of small interest groups. Corruption, cronyism and waste seem to affect all spheres of our public life

## **THAT'S ENOUGH! IT'S TIME TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE IN QUÉBEC!**

We must elect a government that unifies, taking strong and courageous action to tackle the real problems. A government that will put our house in order and rid us of corruption, once and for all.

It is to meet these challenges that the Coalition Avenir Québec was created. Bringing together people from all walks of life who want to move beyond the old debates and work together to serve the interests of all Quebecers, it aims to revitalize Québec by offering a responsible government whose actions are guided by clear principles. A government that is determined to tackle the urgent problems that Québec must solve, at the risk of sinking into a «quiet decline.»

## **THE REAL CHANGE**

The Coalition is the only party that truly embodies change in Québec. For it is the only party that has a free hand and has a single mission: to better serve all Quebecers. This is the only party that seeks to bring together rather than divide Quebecers, to put the welfare of students, patients, families and taxpayers - in short, of all Quebecers - before interest groups.

It is also the only party that has the will to clean house and restore a healthy political climate in Québec. Besides, the very first act to be adopted by a Coalition Avenir Québec government will aim specifically to get rid of corruption and to ensure, from now on, the integrity of public life.

The actions of a Coalition Avenir Québec government will be guided by an explicit bias in favour of citizens. Given the magnitude of the challenges ahead, the time has come to stand together, to put our differences aside and to devote our best energies to the revitalization of Québec.

## **A STRONG, PROUD AND CONFIDENT QUÉBEC**

The division between federalists and sovereignists paralyzes us. In order for Québec to truly move ahead, we must put aside the constitutional debate. The Coalition will promote neither sovereignty nor Canadian unity. Our actions will be guided solely by the superior interests of Québec.

The Coalition also rejects the traditional labels of left or right. The world today is far too complex for these labels, for which Quebecers have no use. Québec is ready for a government that directly addresses its problems and adopts the most effective solutions. This is what the Coalition will do. Our approach will be consistent: confront the problems, identify the best solutions, and implement them with vigour and determination.

My sole motivation for engaging in politics is to revitalize Québec and to ensure a better future for our children and our grandchildren. I commit myself to giving citizens an honest, responsible, efficient government at the service of all Quebecers.

The Coalition is the party of a strong, proud and confident Québec. Of a Québec that strives to achieve its ambitions. To succeed, we must collectively mobilize all our energies. I therefore appeal to all those who want real change to vote for our team on September 4. For it is together that we will reinvigorate Québec.

**François Legault**

Headed by a competent leader and surrounded by a strong team, the Coalition Avenir Québec wants to take Québec out of its lethargy and out of the quarrels between the old parties. It will put the priorities and needs of people before other options, labels and special interests.

The program of the Coalition is the only one with a vision for the future that proposes concrete measures to revitalize Québec.

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**1**  
**SWEEPING CLEANUP  
TO ELIMINATE  
CORRUPTION  
AND WASTE**

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**2**  
**5 MORE HOURS OF HIGH  
SCHOOL WEEKLY**

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**3**  
**A FAMILY DOCTOR  
FOR EVERYONE**

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**4**  
**\$1,000 TAX REDUCTION  
FOR MIDDLE CLASS  
FAMILIES**

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**5**  
**A QUÉBEC OWNING ITS  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
AND CONTROLLING  
ITS ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

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# A GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

The Coalition Avenir Québec wants to give Quebecers a responsible government. The choice of this term is not accidental. For the Coalition, a government that lives up to public confidence implies it assumes its full responsibilities. That is what a Coalition Avenir Québec government intends to do, accept its responsibilities in order to develop the human potential of Quebecers, promote economic growth, increase the efficiency of our large public systems, restore order in public finance, protect the environment, efficiently modernize our infrastructure and promote the cultural and linguistic heritage of Québec.

The implementation of this program raises the question of government's role in Québec society and specifically the criteria to be used to determine the extent and nature of its action. The use of traditional labels - «left» or «right» - is convenient shorthand, but often misleading when addressing the issue. Some people will find justification for a more interventionist government while others will put forward arguments in favour of a laissez-faire approach. Each will criticize the viewpoint of the other. But what Québec needs today are practical solutions to real problems, not sterile debates between advocates of political labels, whether left or right, that merely represent «group-think.»

## THE PUBLIC INTEREST ABOVE ALL

The Coalition believes that it is the public interest, not an ideological presupposition, which must guide government action. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will choose the most appropriate action depending on the situation, not ideology. If greater involvement of the State is required in certain spheres of activity, it will not hesitate to get involved, just as it will not hesitate to reduce the size of redundant structures and, if necessary, decentralize the resources and decision-making centres.

For example, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will take the appropriate steps so that Quebecers take full advantage of the exploitation of their natural resources. It will restore the Department of Transport's means and expertise to protect taxpayers' interests in the public contracts it awards. It will ensure that the Department of the Environment has adequate resources to ensure optimal protection of the outstanding natural heritage of Québec. It will ensure that government managers can discuss on equal terms with the specialized firms in charge of ensuring the computerization of various public services.

A responsible government is also one that recognizes that its very size may impair its efficiency. The size of structures and centralized decision-making in the areas of health and education go against the interests of the population. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will abolish outdated structures and amend certain budgetary rules in these sectors to reduce management costs and ensure that patients, families and students in Québec can receive more direct services.

To govern is to choose. And this is what a Coalition Avenir Québec government intends to do by determining precisely in what circumstances and in what ways the government action will serve the interests of Quebecers. In the past, too many governments have been reluctant to make difficult choices for fear of opposition from interest groups. This lack of vision - or courage - is largely responsible for the current state of affairs.

Quebecers want the government to act when necessary, and refrain when its action is unnecessary or counter-productive. They want a responsible government to lead Québec in a transparent way and put the resources of the State genuinely at the service of all. In short, they want the actions of their government to be guided by the principles of ethics, efficiency and equity. This is what the Coalition intends to offer Quebecers.

## Governing in an ethical manner

The multiple scandals of recent years in Québec have undermined the public's trust in their government. Symptoms of this democratic unease are numerous. They range from the expression of a widespread cynicism towards the public good to a sharp drop in voter turnout, reaching a low of 57% in 2008.

The Coalition Avenir Québec believes that a root cause of the disengagement of Quebecers towards politics is the lack of accountability, transparency and, in some cases, ethics, which too often characterizes the management of public funds in Québec. A responsible government needs to define its actions by a series of rules that guarantee its integrity. But this general principle has been challenged in Québec.

Beyond partisan considerations and crises that too often shake the political scene, the long-standing deleterious situation facing Québec has led to an unprecedented alienation of citizens with regard to our institutions. This threatens the very credibility of the State and, hence, our collective capacity to undertake the reforms that Québec needs.

In fact, a thorough cleanup is required. In order to restore the public trust, the Coalition will make respect for the integrity of public life a primordial value for the government, encompassing the entire public administration, from which citizens expect rigour, transparency and honesty beyond reproach. Upon taking office, the first Bill tabled by a Coalition Avenir Québec government will aim specifically to achieve these goals through a series of robust measures that will ensure, from now on, the integrity of public life. It will also follow any recommendations of the Charbonneau Commission. The Vice-Premier of Québec will have, in a Coalition Avenir Québec government, the explicit responsibility to restore integrity in the public apparatus.

These measures are needed to clean up politics in Québec. And only the Coalition has the courage to adopt and implement them.

### **COMMITMENT 1 : INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER**

To establish the conditions for restoring the public trust, the Coalition Avenir Québec intends to establish an institution capable of rising above the fray, combining under one authority the administration of control and monitoring activities that support the integrity of public life. This institution will consolidate the powers of existing entities and extend them to cover the activities of all persons holding public authority, be they politicians or civil servants at the provincial as well as the municipal level.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will thus create the position of Commissioner for the Integrity of public life, combining the functions of Commissioner for lobbying and Commissioner for ethics. This public official will be responsible for:

- enforcing ethics rules for elected officials, political staff and senior public servants;
- ensuring the integrity of public administration;
- protecting employees who report wrongdoing in connection with the application of a new law governing the reporting of any unethical act (Line 1-800-fonctionnaires) and providing the instruction, by the Commission de la fonction publique, of reprisal complaints forwarded by Commissioner for the Integrity of public life.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will also modernize the Lobbying Act, including the addition of a provision specifically prohibiting the exercise of any lobbying activity with respect to the awarding of a contract between the time of publication of the public bidding and the awarding of the contract. This provision will also increase the minimum amount of fines and create a regime of administrative penalties, as recommended by the Commissioner to lobbying in his report to the Chair of the National Assembly on May 9, 2012.

### **COMMITMENT 2 : INCREASED MONITORING OF PUBLIC BODIES**

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will give more powers to the Auditor General by broadening its auditing mandate with respect to Crown corporations, enabling the AG to verify their management and optimization of resources without the need to obtain the approval of their boards.

### **COMMITMENT 3 : REINFORCED ETHICS ON THE MUNICIPAL SCENE**

The current situation on the municipal scene is somewhat worrying. In recent years, many scandals have tarnished the integrity of several elected officials.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will ensure that all municipal elected officials are better supported by the Québec government in the application of ethics rules, through the appointment of a Municipal Commissioner for ethics.

Furthermore, the minimum size at which a municipality has an obligation to have an auditor general will be reduced from 100,000 to 50,000 inhabitants. An independent auditor general for the municipal sector will also be created. The AG will be responsible for the verification of all activities of municipalities with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants.

#### **COMMITMENT 4 : TRANSPARENCY IN ALL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS**

The Coalition believes that a root cause of disengagement of Quebecers towards politics is linked to the lack of transparency in government action. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will therefore provide, while ensuring protection of personal data and state security, better dissemination of government information. Any department and public body shall be obliged to disclose notably:

- information relating to the entire organization;
- any expenditure, contract or financial commitment of \$25,000 and more.

It will also modernize the Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of Personal Information in order to improve efficiency and reduce delays in obtaining documents.

#### **COMMITMENT 5 : TRANSPARENCY IN PUBLIC FINANCES**

Whether in order to allow parliamentarians to oversee government action or voters to make informed democratic choices, it is essential to be able to correctly assess the state of public finances. However, it is remarkably difficult to obtain a reliable picture of it. We must speak truth to taxpayers and parliamentarians on the situation of Québec's public finances and stop hiding spending between the lines.

Besides the inherent complexity of an organization as large as the Québec government, accounting practices implemented by successive governments have helped to make the issue even more opaque. So much so that revenues and expenditures of a large number of entities controlled by the government are literally taken off the books, consequently, depriving the public of the opportunity to assess their management. The net result of these practices is that a considerable amount of public money is spent or received without the taxpayer being truly informed, a practice denounced by the Auditor General of Québec.

To correct this situation, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will take steps to increase transparency of government information and make the presentation of the government budget comparable to the audited financial statements in order to speak truth to taxpayers and parliamentarians. In addition, it will expand the powers of the Auditor General so that his mandate should include Crown corporations such as Hydro-Québec and other public entities

It will also create a position of Parliamentary Budget Officer, appointed by the National Assembly, to independently analyze the financial position and the estimates

of the Québec government and make recommendations. As a guide, this institution would be created on the same basis as the Parliamentary Budget Officer of the House of Commons in Ottawa.

#### **COMMITMENT 6 : REVIEWING PUBLIC CONTRACT ATTRIBUTION GUIDELINES**

Increased monitoring will not be enough if we do not tackle the source of the problem. Also, new rules for awarding public contracts will be issued. Mechanisms in place, including those of the Department of Transport, will be reviewed. Genuine competition should be encouraged once again. For that purpose, it will be necessary to standardize all the rules and limits for public bodies and extend their scope to municipalities and crown corporations.

We must also end the spiral of extra costs by better supervising the delegated power of public organizations officers and by requiring the systematic publication of any cost overruns in public contracts, as well as their justification. Also, we must provide an opportunity for municipalities to cancel bids if no bidder submits a reasonable price compared to initial estimates.

Finally, we must restore the Department of Transportation's ability to act and verify, hence its ability to fulfill its mission, by employing the expertise within its ranks. This will require enhancing the professional profile of Québec government engineers.

All these actions that will be put in place by a Coalition Avenir Québec government aim to restore the balance between government and businesses in the negotiation and award of contracts. Only on this condition will Québec be able to modernize its infrastructure at the best possible cost.

#### **COMMITMENT 7 : LIMIT SPENDING AND FUNDRAISING OF POLITICAL PARTIES**

The time has come for reform in the financing of Québec political parties. The competition between the major parties induced them into a perpetual race for funding that has become a breeding ground for all the abuses that have been revealed in recent years. In order to clean up political practices in a sustainable way, we must address the pressure that the funding requirements have on the parties.

More ideas and less advertising, that's what people want during election campaigns. So, the Coalition proposes to amend the Election Act to limit donations to \$100 per voter per year and only to one political party. This limit will permit almost all Quebecers, whatever their income, to contribute to the financing of parties. In addition, this new limited amount will make it virtually impossible to use nominees.

Similarly, for every dollar of contribution from a voter, the Chief Electoral Officer will pay \$3 to the party concerned. The spending limit for political parties will also be reduced to \$2 million per year for operational expenses, and \$4 million for election expenses.

The old political parties allowed public funding to be diverted through the use of questionable practices. The measures proposed by the Coalition will help end the occult system of party funding that exists now in Québec. They will also help to reduce the role of money in politics while allowing citizens to continue to support the causes and parties close to their heart.

### **COMMITMENT 8 : FIXED DATE ELECTIONS**

A Coalition Avenir Québec government intends to play fair with the people. But nothing is more contrary to that idea than the abuse in the Québec parliamentary system of the prerogative of the Premier to dissolve the National Assembly and call an election at the time of his choosing. Such a decision is guided exclusively by partisan concerns, as in the case of this election called in the midst of the summer vacation.

In Canada, since 2001, seven provinces, one territory and the House of Commons have passed legislation providing for the holding of fixed date elections every four years. Only Québec, Alberta, Nova Scotia, Yukon and Nunavut have not yet adopted legislation to this effect.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will therefore propose elections to be held at a fixed date every four years, subject to maintaining the confidence of the National Assembly in the government.

## **Governing efficiently**

A responsible government is an efficient government. The opposite of efficiency is the waste and misallocation of resources. Inefficiency is a source of inequity. It deprives citizens of services they deserve. It puts an unnecessarily heavy tax burden on taxpayers. It affects most severely the less fortunate taxpayers - for whom the tax paid represents an even heavier sacrifice - and the people who are most in need of public services. More than a principle of management, efficiency is a moral obligation for any responsible government.

An important part of Quebecers' income is used to fund government missions. A Coalition government will be worthy of this contribution and will manage taxpayers' money with integrity, competence, rigour and accountability.

Its efforts to maximize the efficiency of public management will take three main forms. First, it will impose on the public sector and Crown corporations a major rationalization of operating expenses. Similarly, it will reduce unnecessary decision-making structures, particularly in the areas of health and education as well as at the municipal level, and will transfer the resources made available to schools, institutions and other local bodies.

Governing efficiently also means sending clear signals for a better allocation of resources. An increase in teachers' salaries will permit schools to attract the best talent, raise their training requirements and offer students a better education in Québec. Changing the way physicians are paid will make the care and treatment of patients more rewarding and will ensure that every Quebecer can finally have a family doctor. Funding for hospitals based on volume of care provided, not on historical budgets, will allocate resources to institutions that provide more services and reduce wait times in emergency and for obtaining surgery.

Governing efficiently means also being able to capitalize on the opportunities offered by technological development. But the government's record in this matter is deplorable: astronomical costs, multiple time delays, projects ill-conceived or abandoned along the way. Delays and soaring costs in the computerization of medical records are simply unacceptable. The difficulty in this case is the same as in the relations between the Ministry of Transport and large engineering firms. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will provide the Québec public sector with real expertise in this area so that it can deal on equal terms with the engineering firms and consultants, and will review all operations relating to the computerization of government services. Needed improvements are long overdue; current practices have cost Québec taxpayers dearly.

### **COMMITMENT 9 : BUREAUCRACY DOWNSIZING**

Despite numerous commitments in this regard, the current Liberal government has failed to modernize the state and control the proliferation of the bureaucracy. A number of organizations supposedly abolished were simply transferred elsewhere within the government, with the result that today there are more public bodies than there were 10 years ago. The number of civil servants has not diminished and Quebecers continue to be heavily taxed without receiving the services to match their contribution. Much public infrastructure is maintained in a state of disrepair. In short, the «Liberal reengineering» promised in 2003 never saw the light of day and the «Québec model» is just as cumbersome and inefficient.

Certainly, Québec can count on a competent and professional civil service, whose input has greatly contributed to the modern, open and prosperous society it has become. However, the increase in government missions in the last half century and the growth in size of the public apparatus has led many to question the efficiency of governance. In fact, many public officials and employees complain about the heavy management procedures in place and the lack of motivation that results.

The Coalition considers that the public service and Crown corporation employees should be given the means to get involved and become more accountable for achieving the objectives of their organization. The accountability of members of the public service and employees of Crown corporations is essential for achieving efficiency targets that should be fixed for the coming years. For the Coalition also believes that greater accountability of organizations and individuals will generate efficiency gains, and thus significant savings, while it will also improve the quality of services. This also applies to our largest crown corporation, Hydro-Québec, from which the Coalition will require a special effort in order to make substantial savings in its operating budget.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will require public service and Crown corporations to achieve a major rationalization of their operating expenses. These savings will allow the government to ease the burden on taxpayers while providing additional revenue to make the necessary investments to put Québec back on the right track.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will also undertake to increase the level of responsibility and accountability of all agencies and employees of the public service and Crown corporations, including Hydro-Québec, in order to produce efficiency gains and improve service quality by streamlining administrative processes.

#### **COMMITMENT 10 : STREAMLINE THE STRUCTURES**

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will actually reduce the size of government by reducing unnecessary decision-making levels and structures, particularly in the areas of health and education. It will transfer a portion of these released resources to schools, institutions and local bodies, thereby improving the quantity and quality of direct services to the population.

This reallocation of resources, which will give greater means and flexibility to those who provide direct services to the population, will be accompanied by the establishment of mechanisms to ensure greater accountability in managing public funds.

The reduction of government structures as well as rationalizing the expenditures of Crown corporations will be achieved through attrition and reallocation of resources to frontline facilities in health and education. This operation will be conducted in full compliance with the rights of those affected who will receive adequate compensation at the time of their departure.

#### **COMMITMENT 11 : INTELLIGENT MANAGEMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS**

Québec's public infrastructure is an advanced state of disrepair. There has been an observable deterioration in recent decades, along with allegations of collusion, corruption and cronyism surrounding the industry. As a result, Quebecers do not feel they are getting a good return on their investment. For sure, with plans for multi-billion dollar investments in infrastructure of all kinds, the government has contributed to the enrichment of the construction industry, but what about performance for Quebecers?

Over the years, the Department of Transport (MTQ) has gradually been stripped of its expertise by the private sector, leaving the government without adequate resources to conduct surveillance, coordination and monitoring of projects and investments. The Québec government must retain the expertise to negotiate and work on equal terms with private firms. With billions invested, it is imperative to give Quebecers value for money.

If we really want to upgrade skills, particularly within the MTQ, we must primarily rely on improved working conditions for engineers. They earn an average of \$20,000 less than the engineers at Hydro-Québec and an average of \$30,000 to \$40,000 dollars less than those working in the private sector. This means optimizing their pay, while having high expectations of them.

The challenge of expertise is also huge for municipalities, many of them having no engineer, architect or planner at their service. Therefore, selection committees often have no technical experts capable of evaluating the competence of service providers and the quality of projects submitted. To remedy the problem and ensure optimal management of infrastructure projects and contracts associated with them, a Coalition government will create within MRC centres of expertise with qualified and independent people to support municipalities in the key stages of project granting, management and tracking process.

Moreover, we know that the rule of the lowest bidder is the foundation of our system of awarding contracts, especially in the municipal sector. Elsewhere in the world, other

rules exist under which the highest and lowest bidders are systematically eliminated or those who are above or below a certain standard deviation of the mean. Using the rule of the lowest bidder often results in not selecting the firm that best understands the project or the one that bids the more realistic and reasonable price for a project. We then end up in a spiral of cost overruns or with construction work of poor quality. To avoid this situation, a Coalition government is committed to revise the formula for the lowest bidder to insure a better evaluation of suppliers and a better selection of them.

### **COMMITMENT 12 : REFORM OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA MANAGEMENT**

The current problems of Montreal are a big concern. Following episodes of PQ mergers and Liberal demergers, it seems that our city has become almost ungovernable. Originally, the creation of boroughs was to respect the specificities of different neighbourhoods and provide citizens with access to local services close to home. The powers which are now vested in them paralyze the governance of Montreal and have created overlapping administrative structures that slow down the development of the metropolis.

The fundamental problem of governance in Montreal is the excessive decentralization of authority that makes the central municipality too weak to act alone, and leads to duplication of competencies which multiplies the decision centres.

Add to this the fact that Montreal has a particularly high number of elected officials. New York, indeed, only needs a mayor, 51 councillors and five borough presidents to govern the services provided to 8.2 million people. Toronto has a mayor and 44 councillors for a population of 2.6 million people. Why then should there be a mayor for the city, 18 borough mayors and 84 councillors – a total of 103 elected officials - for a population of 1.6 million in Montreal?

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will therefore revise the division of powers between the boroughs of Montreal and the central municipality in accordance with the subsidiarity principle. It will also eliminate the positions of borough councillor and reduce the number of councillors to less than 50. In the same spirit of simplification and streamlining of structures, it will review the planning of public transportation in the metropolitan area.

### **COMMITMENT 13 : BETTER PLANNING OF METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION**

Governing efficiently also means ensuring that the rules and responsibilities are clear and consistent. Unfortunately, the multiplication of administrative structures often affects the quality of planning, generates inefficiencies and contributes to slowing down the process.

A clear example in this regard concerns the planning of public transportation in the Montreal area. Currently spread among several agencies, the roles and responsibilities are confused, which ultimately undermines the emergence of an integrated and coherent vision of planning and development of metropolitan transportation.

The case of the Metropolitan Transportation Agency (AMT) is particularly problematic. It has a triple role: it schedules the transit network, operates it (at the metropolitan level) and redistributes the money for public transit. This triple role generates tension and undermines the decision-making.

A future government of the Coalition Avenir Québec will thus replace the AMT by a Crown corporation under the Government of Québec whose mission will be to plan, finance and carry out the entire transport infrastructure for the metropolitan network (road and transit). Responsibilities for operating the network and redistributing the money to transport companies will lie respectively at the municipal and metropolitan levels.

#### **COMMITMENT 14 : GIVE MUNICIPALITIES MORE POWERS**

Over the decades, the desire of localities and regions to have more control over their development has never wavered. Unfortunately, the promises of decentralization most often remained short-lived. But the municipal sector is ready to become more active, take on more responsibility and be accountable to citizens in an efficient and direct manner. This is what a Coalition Avenir Québec government intends to permit.

To ensure Quebecers optimal management of their taxes, the Coalition believes that we should grant more autonomy to local decision-makers. Whenever they are better placed to make decisions or to manage a service, they will have all the political, legislative and financial margin of maneuver to do so.

With this new margin of maneuver will come increased obligations of transparency and accountability. This is the modern way of governing. Specific measures of accountability proposed by the Coalition will therefore apply to municipalities, such as the appointment of internal auditors and the creation of the post of municipal Auditor General.

With the objective to proceed with a real decentralization and to govern efficiently, a government of the Coalition will submit a draft Charter of municipalities defining a new relationship between government and the municipalities, both politically and financially.

Municipalities have limited sources of revenue and the pressure on property tax is high. In many cases, residential, commercial and industrial development faces very real

limits, especially when agricultural land is nearby. In return, municipal bonds continue to grow, especially for central cities that face increasingly complex social, economic and environmental challenges.

The financial flexibility of municipalities is more limited than ever, given the importance of their payroll and the financial pressure on the pension plans of their employees. The combination of these elements creates extreme pressure on municipal governments, pressure that continues to grow.

Quebecers have the right to expect quality municipal services but, in the present context, it is difficult for elected officials to offer them those services. A Coalition government is committed to allowing municipalities more flexibility in terms of labour relations. Upon the election of a Coalition government, a committee of experts will be formed to provide sustainable solutions for the management of pension plans for municipal employees.

## **Governing with fairness**

The principle of equity is imperative to guide the action of a responsible government. This principle will apply in three ways in a future Legault government. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will ensure that all Quebecers have access to quality services. The policies put in place will have a central goal : to ensure that all students in Québec have access to quality training, that all Quebecers have access to a family doctor, and that all parents have more options for childcare without loss of wages.

Also, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will apply the principle of equitable tax contributions in a specific manner. Too often, extra tax burdens are placed on the taxpayer without the government, companies or organizations responsible for this expense having previously cleaned house themselves. Accordingly, under a government of Coalition Avenir Québec, any additional funding provided by the government to different agencies and departments will be conditional on a genuine effort to streamline their operations.

Finally, fairness requires that all pay their fair share of taxes. This principle is obviously binding on all generations. Benefiting from services now and shifting the cost to future generations is an unacceptable departure from the principle of intergenerational equity. Negligence in the maintenance of infrastructure is another departure from this principle because it postpones these major costs on the shoulders of future generations.

## **COMMITMENT 15 : \$ 1,000 TAX RELIEF TO FAMILIES**

The Coalition will act in a way to ensure that taxpayer funds are distributed in a fair and reasonable manner. Thus, before asking Quebecers for an additional contribution, it should make sure that all efforts have been made to reduce expenses beforehand. Common sense should also prevail in the distribution of the tax effort required. Asking the least wealthy taxpayers for a contribution is unfair. Forcing a small number of taxpayers to bear the entire burden is unreasonable.

Yet the government of Québec has imposed a contribution to healthcare funding of \$200 per person. The purpose of this tax is to extract nearly a billion dollars from the pockets of taxpayers to finance the health services. This approach is unfair and inadequate. Unfair, because it will hit the less fortunate citizens and the middle class very hard. Inadequate, because these additional resources are not allocated for specific purposes, and it is likely to fund unnecessary administrative expenses.

The Coalition believes that no tax or fee increase should be required from taxpayers without the applicant organization – primarily, the government - having first cleaned house. However, Quebecers have good reason to believe that this exercise was not completed in the health sector. Their reluctance to pay more for uncertain results is perfectly legitimate. It is similar in the education sector. There is ultimately no reason to make the taxpayer pay the excessive costs generated by the current deficiencies in the government in regard to the granting and monitoring of government contracts.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government is committed to take steps to eliminate waste and useless bureaucratic structures, particularly in the areas of health and education. Released funds will be used for two purposes. First, to provide more direct services to patients, students and families of Québec. Second, to ease the tax burden on the middle class.

The Coalition Avenir Québec is committed specifically to reducing the tax burden on middle class families by eliminating the health tax and reducing school taxes in its first budget. It will then gradually reduce the taxes paid by these families. In total, the Coalition Avenir Québec will give a tax break of \$1,000 per family to middle class families over the next five years.

## **COMMITMENT 16 : READJUST THE UNIVERSITY TUITION FEE INCREASE**

The position of the Coalition on university tuition fee hikes is based on the principle of equity. First, the Coalition is concerned that tuition fees were not increased systematically along with the rising cost of living. This would have prevented the escalation around this issue and its exploitation for political purposes. It would also have avoided

the imposition of tariff shocks to certain cohorts of students. In this sense, it would have been both more transparent and fair.

Partisanship aside, the objective of all parties is to ensure access to quality university education for all young Quebecers who want it. Achieving these two goals requires a delicate balance. Higher tuition fees would provide universities with the resources to improve the education offered to students. But many fear that a too rapid and marked increase in tuition fees may limit students' access to university studies and impact the future prospects of young graduates.

The role of government is to offer responsible solutions to this type of dilemma. In doing so, a government must demonstrate leadership and be able to make decisions. Providing leadership in 2012 also means listening and being open to discussion in order to reach a responsible compromise. A government must be firm without being intransigent.

The main reason why the Coalition supports an increase in tuition fees is its desire to ensure adequate funding to Québec universities. But right from the start, the Coalition expressed concern about the need for neutralizing the effects of the increase on students from less privileged backgrounds and also the middle class.

Since a major priority of the Coalition is the efficient and transparent management of public funds, we also believe that universities must do their part by streamlining their administrative costs to maximize direct services to students.

In light of the views expressed in recent months, and taking into account the still insufficient rate of university graduation in Québec, especially among those of French language, the Coalition concluded that rising tuition fees should be adjusted downward in order to avoid a too strong tariff shock and to address concerns about accessibility to university studies. It therefore proposes:

- That fees be increased by \$200 per year over the next five years, and then indexed annually for inflation;
- That the first installment of this increase come into effect at the session beginning in January 2013;
- That the planned measures to improve the program of financial assistance to students be maintained;

- That the additional funding to universities by the fee increase be conditional on the submission by them of a plan to streamline their management, providing better services to students through a better allocation of resources;
- That the increase in university funding be achieved in part by a decrease in the tax credit for postsecondary education at the university level.

Although the abrupt election call in the middle of summer is based on a partisan calculation clearly linked to the holding of the Charbonneau Commission in the fall, the election campaign in Québec should have the benefit of resolving the crisis created in the wake of the debate on tuition fees. It is in this spirit that the Coalition proposes a compromise to restore social peace in Québec, to enable students to return to class under the best possible conditions and to ensure the holding of a general election in a calm and respectful climate.

#### **COMMITMENT 17 : DEAL WITH THE PUBLIC DEBT RESPONSIBLY**

Throughout the world we have witnessed the painful effects arising from negligence to repay the public debt. A Coalition Avenir Québec government does not intend to wait to be backed into a corner before acting.

It is urgent to reduce the debt burden of the Government of Québec. Currently, it has reached 183.8 billion dollars. And it continues to increase. In 2011-2012 only, 10 billion dollars were added to the gross debt of Québec, an increase of 6%. It is estimated to grow by a further \$8 billion in 2012-2013 (4.3%). If we add the debt of municipalities, Hydro-Québec, universities and other government enterprises, Québec's total debt amounts to over \$250 billion, not counting the federal debt.

Interest paid on this debt is now the third largest budget item and now totals \$10 billion per year, which is \$940 per Quebecer or \$1,100 per taxpayer. An irrefutable reality. The weight of this debt collectively stifles us and prevents us from looking forward with confidence. Moreover, it weighs on the future of our children, condemning them to have to contribute a disproportionate share of their income to pay for services they have never been able to benefit from. It also deprives them of the freedom of choice that should be theirs, and this, in a context where important challenges - particularly the aging of the population - will only increase the burden they would in any way have to support.

Reducing public indebtedness means freeing up resources for the financing of important missions of the State. It also respects the fundamental principle of intergenerational equity and opens up the future for coming generations. Whereas

reducing personal taxes, including for families of the middle class, remains an important goal, the Coalition Avenir Québec therefore assumes that a responsible government should, in circumstances like ours, prioritize the repayment of debt.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will therefore respect the principle of intergenerational equity in its management of public finances. It will prioritize the repayment of debt, without excluding measures to reduce personal income taxes, especially those of middle class families.

### **COMMITMENT 18 : APPLYING ROYALTIES FROM NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES TOWARDS THE DEBT**

The Coalition Avenir Québec believes it is only natural that the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources within the territory of Québec should benefit all Quebecers, not just those who happen to be living at the moment of their extraction.

However, the charges levied on the exploitation of our natural resources are used today to pay for our grocery spending. We should not accept bequeathing to our children and grandchildren a Québec with depleted coffers while the debt they will inherit continues to rise.

It is therefore right and proper that all royalties from the exploitation of our exhaustible natural resources should be allocated to the reduction of Québec's debt. In this way, we ensure that our valuable non-renewable natural resources are effectively used to preserve our collective wealth and prepare for the future so that forthcoming generations are able to benefit tomorrow from our actions of today.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will thus allocate 100% of the royalties generated by the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources toward the repayment of the public debt.

### **COMMITMENT 19 : FIRM AND FAIR JUSTICE**

Justice and fairness are closely linked. In this regard, the primary mission of a modern State is to ensure the safety, security and well-being of individuals on its entire territory. This is an essential and prerequisite condition for the development and fulfillment of any civilized society. To fulfill this function, the State must develop competent and impartial institutions for law enforcement that citizens can trust

However, an overview of the administration of justice in Québec is very disturbing: leniency towards criminals, lack of humanity toward the victims, inefficiency in services

to citizens, etc. When fifty per cent of the population say they do not trust the courts, we're really speaking about a crisis in trust.

Again, let's bring about change!

First, if rehabilitation is desirable for criminals, we must stop being so permissive in the case of serious crimes. Citizens are tired of light sentences being handed down for violent crimes against persons, especially sex offenders, and for criminal drivers. A Coalition Avenir Québec government intends to demonstrate greater severity against these types of crimes.

If our justice system must be a deterrent and tough on crime, it must also demonstrate greater humanity to the victims of crime. The consequences of a crime can be very painful and create difficult situations calling for greater assistance for the victim. That is why the Coalition considers it as equally important both to rehabilitate offenders and to make resources available to their victims. It therefore intends to better assist victims of crime by extending support to their parents and relatives, and by increasing the financial compensation to cover their rehabilitation.

A massive job needs to be done to restore the image of our justice system. Too many people refuse to take legal action to enforce their rights, fearing long delays or excessive costs. A more accessible and efficient system that will not become mired in the administrative and bureaucratic maze that delays judgments, awards and decisions, this is what's needed to restore the confidence of Quebecers in court institutions.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government also intends to assume the necessary leadership and efficiently combat tobacco smuggling. It has become so widespread that 36% of cigarettes smoked in Québec schoolyards come from the illicit market!

Finally, it is inconceivable that it costs the State more on a daily basis to house an inmate than it does for a senior citizen who pays part of his or her accommodation in a nursing home. A Coalition Avenir Québec government intends to make inmates pay a portion of their correctional accommodation, according to their financial means.

# **PUBLIC SERVICES: EFFICIENCY IN THE SERVICE OF SOLIDARITY**

Public services offered by a government are a reflection of societal choices. Québec has set itself the goal of being one of the best places to raise a family and has developed services accordingly. It also chose to establish public systems such as that of the public prescription drug insurance plan to ensure a fair and affordable coverage to the entire population. Many other actions - for example, efforts to lower the school dropout rate in disadvantaged areas - have been deployed. These choices are based on a vision of society where solidarity and mutual assistance have their place.

The Coalition shares these values. It also poses a critical look at the management of public services in Québec, which falls far short of our potential. Too much money invested is used to cover the costs of management, which infringes on the social solidarity so dear to Quebecers. This inefficiency is also a source of inequity, the most obvious being that one Quebecer in four still does not have a family doctor and is thus deprived of an essential access to the health system.

## **MORE EFFICIENT PUBLIC NETWORKS**

For the Coalition, the future and the prosperity of a society are built by relying on efficient public networks that provide quality services at optimum cost. The best investment any society can make from this perspective is to develop a system of top class education. This will be the top priority of the Coalition Avenir Québec government. The revitalization of Québec goes hand in hand, as happened during the Quiet Revolution, with an upgrade in education and massive investments in this sector.

The family is the basic unit of society. The Québec government should provide families with services to match their essential role. New steps must be taken to ensure a better balance between work and family. Similarly, Québec must make major efforts - and they are long overdue - to improve the quality of life for seniors and recognize the enormous potential they represent.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will set ambitious targets, thus improving the quality of education, healthcare and services to family. But to achieve these objectives, the action of the Coalition should be based on clear principles. These can be summarized in one formula: putting the citizen first.

## **PUTTING THE CITIZEN FIRST**

Provide quality public services to Québec families in the areas of health and education is a complex undertaking. People who are entrusted with the operation of these services face many challenges they perform essentially with dedication and professionalism. One must however agree that the bureaucratic imperatives of managing public services seem to have too often taken precedence over those to whom services are intended. The Coalition believes that in matter of public services in Québec is over-administered and that a significant proportion of resources devoted to the bureaucracy could be more usefully employed to provide direct services to the population.

Management costs are too high, they increase the burden on taxpayers and deprive Quebecers of services they deserve. Endorse the status quo is an impediment to progress in Québec and a short-sighted policy. The best way to ensure the quality of life of Quebecers in the future is to eliminate waste and to refocus the delivery of public services on people's needs and reflect their evolution.

Efficiency and rigour must be harnessed for Quebecers. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will ensure that quality public services are truly available to all. This clearly means that the Coalition Avenir Québec will take the necessary steps to ensure that all Quebecers receive the best training possible, enjoy equitable access to the health system and can fulfill their family obligations.

## **Education : the key to the development of Québec**

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will make education its top priority. For that purpose, it will put forward bold measures to ensure that the education system in Québec become one of the best in the world by 2020.

For if our progresses in education are undeniable, serious problems remain. The Québec education system is struggling to adapt to economic and social realities of today. Teachers are not sufficiently valued, schools do not have the powers and resources necessary to carry out their mission and school structures are too heavy, too expensive and too centralized. The Coalition wants to ensure that the powers and resources are allocated to the level best placed to manage and respond to student needs. Roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder will be able to be better defined, and everyone will respond more directly of its management.

Ensuring to all a quality education, these measures will help reduce dropouts, improve the quality of education received by young Quebecers, better distribute authority and

resources to empower those in charge to ensure their academic success, as well as provide both better access to university education and adequate funding of our universities.

### **QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL**

All children in Québec go through primary school and high school. How can we ensure that this passage is as productive as possible? How can we ensure that persons destined to post-secondary studies enter college in the best possible conditions? How can we ensure that those who do not wish to continue their education beyond high school can do so by putting the odds on their side in the labour market?

An initial response lies upstream of the school system. Some children get in kindergarten already having significant developmental delays. This is why a Coalition Avenir Québec government will ensure that daycare available to children in Québec offers a safe and stimulating environment. It will also devote additional resources to help identify learning problems so that appropriate support is provided as quickly as possible for children in need.

The other response to previous questions is clear, although its implementation is a big challenge. So that each student gets the best of its passage in primary and secondary, we must ensure a quality education to all. How? The Coalition believes in giving more means and resources to schools, including teachers and specialists who provide the front line training for students. The Coalition believes too we must better define the responsibilities of each actor (service centre, school, teachers) in the education community to ensure that schools are more autonomous, more accountable and better equipped.

### **A MAJOR EDUCATIONAL PROJECT**

Throughout the world we seek ways to improve student retention and academic success. Many studies have been conducted on this subject to identify the factors that positively influence student motivation, in particular, which is directly related to persistence. The studies identify the socioeconomic background of students, their bond of trust with their teacher, self-esteem, pride, sense of belonging to their school, etc.

It is based on such factors that the Coalition presents a program to address vigorously the important dropout rate of young Quebecers. It will prioritize interventions in lower socioeconomic backgrounds where the dropout rate is higher.

Improving working conditions, autonomy and the professional support given to teachers will also help reduce turnover and increase the attractiveness of the profession. The targeted investment in support for children with learning disabilities

will give teachers significant support from professionals, enabling them to devote more time to educational supervision for students.

But beyond specific measures, so necessary they may be, it is also a certain idea of the school, both as a living and as a learning environment, which must emerge. Because the sense of belonging to a school is an important determinant of the success of our students. This is where the extracurricular educational activities become important.

Given the working pace of parents, and to provide as many students as possible an environment for success, we believe we must also rethink the school day schedule. Achieving this ambitious goal goes through the implementation of several measures including longer hours of teaching, the development of help for homework, a selection of after-school educational, sporting and cultural activities, and a greater presence of teachers and staff providing the supervision and monitoring of students.

The Coalition therefore aims to make young Quebecers to benefit of an integrated strategy to offer them every opportunity to graduate school. It will act on all fronts for success. Furthermore, such an approach will make the school the place of ultimate transmission of a true culture of physical activity and sport.

A school open to society, adapted to the needs of families and concerned about the success of each and all, this is the great educational project of the Coalition Avenir Québec.

#### **COMMITMENT 20 : 5 MORE HOURS OF OF HIGH SCHOOL WEEKLY**

The Coalition tables on after school activities as part of the strategy to develop a more attractive and motivating learning milieu and improve life within our schools. The positive impact of after school activities and other such initiatives on student retention, notably boys and those from less fortunate neighborhoods, has been demonstrated by numerous specialists.

To extend and enrich the time spent by students in high school and thereby promote academic success, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will therefore add an hour a day to the high school schedule.

During these five additional hours per week, students will be invited to a series of activities such as homework help, reading periods or extracurricular activities. This measure will be implemented gradually from the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, starting with schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Moreover, a Québec Avenir Coalition government seeks to promote the modification of the schedule of schools in order to start the courses, to the extent possible, at 9 in the morning.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the benefits of a schedule more compatible with the sleep cycle of adolescents. In addition, school hours are often incompatible with the reality of today's families and the pace of work of parents, who often have each a full-time job. Thus the Coalition wishes that schools tend towards an ideal schedule, that of school "from 9 to 5".

These changes should be made while taking into account the realities of the different backgrounds and various regions of Québec. Uniformity will not be imposed, given the constraints that may justify a different schedule than the «9 to 5».

### **COMMITMENT 21 : MAJOR OFFENSIVE TO FIGHT THE SCHOOL DROP-OUT RATE**

The dropout rate remains too high in Québec. Despite recent attempts to present reality in a more favourable light, the fact remains that in the public network, one in five students drops out of school before graduation. For boys, it's one in four!

Despite the resources allocated to this problem and devotion of academic and social stakeholders, the progresses in the fight against dropping out remain still insufficient. This situation has serious socioeconomic consequences for Québec. In addition to human costs associated with dropping out very important, it is estimated that the shortfall and social costs associated with the dropping out of a single student stood at \$ 120 000 in 2009 compared to a high school graduate. Collectively, all of Québec is depleted when part of his youth is deprived of the tools that would enable it to reach its full potential.

The high dropout rate in Québec is due to a combination of factors. The first is a poor allocation of resources between advantaged and disadvantaged neighborhoods. The current system favors a sprinkling of financial resources among school boards and schools, rather than a targeted approach to areas and clientele most at risk. In addition, our school system counts about 2,460 public schools and 330 private schools. As private schools accept very few students with learning difficulties, the pressure on public schools becomes even more important.

A second problem is the difficulty in attracting the most experienced teachers in schools that need it most. Experienced teachers often find themselves in wealthy environments, while the new recruits will inherit the most difficult ones and will be waiting to have the necessary seniority to choose another school. The constant renewal of the teaching staff in risk settings creates an instability that is not conducive to student success. In addition, this staff mobility prevents the formation of true school teams, essential to achieve ambitious educational projects and full involvement of teachers. There is a similar stability problem in the assignment of principals, which makes it difficult for teachers and

makes it difficult to implement measures of long-term improvement in these schools.

A third difficulty arises from the nature of academic courses offered in high school. Many students drop out of school system by the end of the third year after experiencing difficulties in the general education training leading to postsecondary education. Others leave for the same reasons and return to school only after a long, often unsatisfactory detour on the labour market. In both cases, rehabilitation is difficult because the initial experience – whether the person decides to resume his studies or not - has ended in a failure. Clearly, from this perspective, an extensive study should be conducted on the educational pathways to high school and especially on the crucial period that represents the transition from third to fourth secondary.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will therefore make every effort to address the dropout rate. Many of the measures will help improve the situation. This is particularly true of the wage increase for teachers working in disadvantaged areas, the increase in resources for school administrators, as well as future efforts to upgrade and promote vocational and technical training.

To improve the situation, the Coalition believes that we must set clear goals - ambitious but achievable. Thus a Coalition Avenir Québec government will aim to increase by 8% in the horizon 2020 the graduation rate of the 20 year olds students, which will rise from 72% to 80%.

In short, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will make of the dropout problem in high school a construction site and assemble in one team all stakeholders so that everything is done to achieve this goal without reducing the quality of diplomas.

In addition, it will devote additional resources to support teachers in their work with students having learning difficulties. The addition of professional specialized in speech therapy, psychoeducation, and remedial education and in psychology in schools, including those from the poorest backgrounds, is one of the keys to success for these students. Schools where are found the highest concentrations of students with difficulties will be given priority in the allocation of money and resources to promote their integration and success.

## **COMMITMENT 22 : MORE AUTONOMY FOR SCHOOLS**

The Coalition believes it is important to give more autonomy to schools. These are best placed to understand the particular needs of their clientele and respond to it in the most appropriate and efficient manner. The Coalition would therefore increase the powers and resources of schools to enable them to complete their mission.

Currently, the operating costs of school boards reach over \$ 600 million per year, a considerable sum. The Coalition believes that much of the resources currently devoted to management activities by the school boards could be more usefully redeployed to schools to provide more direct services to students. The abolition of school boards will save about half of their current operating budget and reduce the number of staff dedicated to managing the network and not to direct services to students. The other half of the budget, as well as some current staff of school boards, these will be distributed among schools and regional service centres, a flexible and light structure that will be placed at the service schools and that will better meet their needs.

The abolition of school boards will save about half of their current operating budget and reduce the number of staff dedicated to managing the network and not directing services to students. The other half of the budget, as well as some current staff of school boards, these will be distributed among schools and regional service centres, a flexible and light structure that will be placed at the service of schools and will better meet their needs.

The increased resources and powers given to schools will allow them to enjoy greater autonomy and better align the services they offer to the needs of their communities. Their greater flexibility will allow responding efficiently to specific problems that are experienced in schools.

As for service centres, they will support the services that schools alone cannot manage or that they want the management to be shared (school transportation, management and maintenance of schools, for example). They will also take over some of the powers currently devolved to regional offices of the Department of Education. 39 in number, these service centres will meet the needs of schools and their environment (30 in the French network and 9 for the English system).

The role of the parents and of the community within the education system will be preserved and increased. The abolition of school elections and the role of Commissioner will be accompanied by an increase in power and the representativeness of the institution boards. As for the English community, their rights will be respected and its representation ensured on boards of institutions of English language schools and in the nine centres of English services.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government is committed to increasing the powers to school principals by abolishing school boards and transferring to school councils, with the status of a board, the powers they need to meet their mission and needs of their

clientele. Functions that cannot be accomplished by schools will be assigned, on a regional basis, to 30 service centres for the French network and 9 English speaking service centres.

School elections and commissioner positions will be eliminated. Representativeness of governing boards will be increased. The abolition of school boards will save about half their current operating budget. The other half will be divided between schools and regional service centres.

Moreover, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will limit the growth rate of school tax. For the sake of efficiency, it will be charged at the same time as the property tax by municipalities, which will be compensated accordingly, and be delivered directly to the Government of Québec.

### **COMMITMENT 23 : IMPROVING THE IMAGE OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION**

To ensure academic success, it is essential to have competent and motivated teachers. However, if teachers are at the heart of our education system, their profession is too often devalued. Their pay is not up to the importance that society attaches to their function. The profession fails to attract the best among university applicants, more attracted to areas most valued and with higher incomes. This trend must be reversed. As in other states (Finland for example), Québec must develop an education system whose reputation is such that the best candidates will compete for access to education faculties.

Increase the average salaries of teachers and principals at the primary and high school levels. Each teacher will see his or her salary increase significantly but these pay raises will vary depending on certain parameters, including the school's socioeconomic profile, the teacher's academic record, the teacher's involvement in after school activities and if the teacher's does mentoring with younger teachers

This greater accountability of teachers, however, must be achieved through a better assessment of their performance. Established after consultation with teachers and school principals, and considering the standards established by the future order of teachers, this evaluation process will support teachers in their continuous improvement process. The goal is obviously not to link teacher evaluation to a single factor, such as the success rate of students, but to arrive to assess comprehensively the quality of their teaching, taking into account all factors taking place in the environment where they teach.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will therefore adopt a package of measures to enhance and professionalize the teaching profession, as well as giving teachers more authority, resources and responsibilities in their job descriptions. Thus, it will:

- increase the average pay of teachers and principals of primary and secondary schools. Each teacher will have his salary increased significantly, but increases will vary depending on certain parameters, including socioeconomic profile of the school, number of years of schooling, involvement in extracurricular activities and being a mentor to younger teachers;
- increase teacher autonomy by ensuring that they choose themselves the teaching methods best suited to their students, including the recommendation of repeating a grade when necessary;
- create a professional order of teachers in charge of setting the conditions for access to the profession, continuing education requirements, standards for teacher evaluation, as well as the ethical standards applicable to them. This order will also promote educational excellence and represent the profession with government;
- reassess the rules governing the granting of tenure for teachers, which will from now on be allocated on the entire territory of Québec;
- establish, after consultation with teachers and school principals, measures to evaluate the overall performance of teachers and foster continuous improvement.

#### **COMMITMENT 24 : INCREASE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY GRADUATION RATES**

The graduation rates rose at college and university levels in recent decades, but they are still insufficient. Too few students begin postsecondary education and too few complete their training: only 63% of college students and 70% of university students are likely to obtain their diplomas.

Québec has filled some of its historical delay in university education. The goal now is to catch up permanently the most advanced societies. The first offensive must take place in the college system. The graduation rate is insufficient. Colleges will have to engage in the coming years to consolidate the measures taken to counter the dropout phenomenon and ensure that by 2020 the graduation rate in colleges reaches the 75% threshold.

Québec universities must also address the dropout problem, particularly acute during the first two years of students' academic path. The massive presence of lecturers during this crucial period of student training is, in this regard, a practice that should be

reviewed. Québec universities will be invited to develop an action plan to increase undergraduate academic perseverance and stimulate further studies in the second and third cycle (where Québec is lagging behind by much). The objective of these measures is to increase graduation rates at universities from 70% to 80% by 2020.

### **COMMITMENT 25 : PROFESSIONAL TRAINING TO MEET THE JOB MARKET NEEDS**

One should not underestimate the importance of providing a quality vocational and technical teaching, responding adequately to the needs of the labour market. The future of an economy like ours depends largely on the availability of skilled and highly specialized labour. Vocational or technical training is often the passport to a good and well paid job.

By making education a priority, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will ensure not to leave out the vocational and technical training. It will rather make it a spearhead of its educational and economic development strategy. Indeed, the existence of a critical mass of graduates specialized in sectors of the future will not only meet the needs of the workforce of existing businesses, but will also have a power of attraction to encourage others to settle in all regions of Québec.

In order to efficiently meet the needs of the labour market and the aspirations of its students, the vocational and technical training, however, must be able to adjust accurately and quickly to changing business needs. It is therefore important to ensure that the world of education does not work in isolation, but rather in constant communication with businesses and economic development agencies in each region.

Recognizing at its true value the importance of vocational and technical training as a way forward for many young people and for several economic sectors in search of skilled labour, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will actively promote strong links between institution directors, businesses and government agencies for economic development. It will also ensure that the vocational and technical training can respond more flexibly to the specific needs of people already on the labour market and seeking additional training or a career change.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will also promote the emergence of centres of excellence in some college and university programs. These centres of excellence are designed to train a critical mass of expertise and specialized graduates in growth sectors to not only provide for the workforce needs of existing businesses, but also to exercise a power of attraction to induce others to settle in Québec, especially in the regions.

Continuing education is now an imperative in modern economies. In some cases, this upgrade requires a temporary withdrawal from the labour market. The costs of such a move can be very high, especially for workers with family responsibilities. To encourage such projects, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will create a working committee with the mandate to develop an education savings plan program for this particular category of workers.

### **COMMITMENT 26 : ENTERPRISE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS**

For students, the ability to switch from one world to another – from studying to working - is a great way to deepen their knowledge and gain experience. Internship programs in business or work-study alternately, already available in some university faculties of Québec, are giving students multiple benefits. They enable them both to discover the reality of the labour market, to better understand the domain to which they are moving and thereby confirm their interest in pursuing this path, to develop often promising links with employers where they perform an internship and to gain valuable experience. They can take a step ahead in the race for better jobs, and, of course, earn revenue.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will promote the establishment of internship programs in business and of work-study alternately programs in all cases and at all levels where such programs are possible within the framework of vocational and technical training at college and university levels.

### **COMMITMENT 27 : BETTER TEACHING OF LANGUAGES**

The French language is at the heart of our collective identity and culture in Québec. Its mastery is fundamental to the influence of our society just as it is essential to personal fulfillment and career of Quebecers. Yet the quality of written and spoken French of Québec youth is often criticized, and many decry the quality of teaching, which they perceive as a failure of the school system. These criticisms being justified or not, all will agree that mastering French deserves greater efforts from all stakeholders in the field of education, starting with the students themselves. A major correction is urgent.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government therefore entrust the school system - from elementary to college - the primary mission of improving the knowledge of French among young Quebecers. Additional resources will be provided and consultations held with key stakeholders (teachers, parents and student representatives) to ensure that these additional resources are managed with maximum efficiency. To measure the success of these measures, national examinations will be added in all cycles of primary and secondary studies to test proficiency in French for all young people.

Moreover, in today's world, being bilingual is an essential asset for success in several areas. Thus, the Coalition supports the approach of intensive teaching of English as a second language that can begin from the fifth grade. However, it believes that teachers are best placed to determine the manner in which this intensive teaching must be provided, as well as teaching methods most appropriate for their students. This is especially true in regard to students with special needs and for which the intensive teaching of English can be a difficult challenge to overcome.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will adopt a series of measures, from elementary to college, to ensure better mastery of French and English languages among young Quebecers. Thus, it will :

- a) entrust the school system the priority mission to ensure proficiency in French for all students, which will be assessed through examinations at all cycles of primary and secondary studies;
- b) promote the intensive teaching of English as a second language while allowing schools and teachers autonomy to choose methods that meet the needs of their students including those with special needs.

#### **COMMITMENT 28 : ELIMINATE THE ETHICS AND RELIGIOUS CULTURE COURSE AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL**

The Ethics and Religious Culture course was set up in the primary and secondary schools in Québec following the deconfessionalization of school boards and implementation of curriculum reform. This subject is taught throughout primary studies and for four years in high school. However, many parents are skeptical about the relevance of this course and how it is taught, especially at primary school.

If we can meet the objectives of the Ethics and Religious Culture course, we may question its relevance in a context where primary teachers struggle to teach core subjects. In high school, this course seems more proper to be taught, given the maturity of students and the situations they face during adolescence.

To make more time for core subjects, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will propose the abolition of the course of Ethics and Religious Culture in the primary. The course will be maintained in secondary school.

**COMMITMENT 29 : ECONOMY, PERSONAL FINANCE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP COURSE**  
Québec needs a strong generation of entrepreneurs to support its economy. However, young Quebecers are half as likely as young Ontarians to want to become entrepreneurs.

Similarly, studies show that young people have little knowledge of basic economic concepts and realities and how different credit products work. There are countless reminders to increase the savings rate. In this field as in many others, the most stubborn habits are those that start early. It is therefore important to sensitize young people to the importance of these concepts before they reach the labour market.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will propose the creation of a compulsory course on economics, personal finance and entrepreneurship to bridge the lack of knowledge of our youth in those matters. Through this course at the fourth year of high school, they will develop a better understanding of personal finance management. It will also help them to prevent from indebting and to begin their citizen lives better informed. This course will also educate students to the concept of entrepreneurship in explaining the workings of a company and giving them the opportunity to get involved in a concrete business.

### **COMMITMENT 30 : BETTER INTEGRATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Currently, many students with disabilities or difficulties of any kind are integrated into classes called regular, especially in elementary school. If the grounds for such integration are often appropriate, it can sometimes pose significant difficulties for both the student and his parents as well as for the teacher and other classmates. These difficulties are exacerbated by the lack of specialized resources, so often decried by teachers as by parents.

Thus it is important to be more rigorous and to tighten the criteria for placement of students with disabilities or special challenges to enable a successful and profitable integration to all students in the class. It is also important to ensure that students and teachers have access to specialized resources they need, whether it be speech therapy, remedial education, psycho-education or psychology, and, especially in schools with the highest concentrations of students with special challenges.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government, in partnership with teachers and principals, will review the standards for integration into regular classes of students with special needs, will encourage the increase of groups responding specifically to their needs and increase the specialized resources available to students and teachers.

### **COMMITMENT 31 : INCREASE UNIVERSITY FUNDING**

Québec university system must be able to continue to assert itself on the international stage. Its chronic underfunding is a major obstacle to achieving this goal. A Coalition Avenir Québec government is committed to give the Québec university system the means to maintain and strengthen its tradition of excellence in research and teaching.

These amounts shall be used exclusively to improve the performance of universities in terms of student retention, training and research. Also, this important government reinvestment in the university system should be accompanied by significant efforts to streamline operating and management expenses in universities, which must be included in action plans to be submitted by each university to the government. Plans should also include strategies for concerted action with other universities in order to develop centres of excellence in certain programs or niches.

Structures will also be eased or abolished. Each university, including all those of the Université du Québec network, will have to be related for accountability directly with the Ministry of Education through performance contracts. The head office of the Université du Québec will be eliminated, allowing a saving of about \$ 10 million. In total, the Coalition considers that the management costs of Québec universities will have to show significant savings on the horizon 2016-2017.

## **Health: direct services to the population**

Accessibility to quality health care remains a major priority in the hearts and minds of Quebecers. In spite of this, it appears that under the present conditions, bureaucratic red tape considerations take precedence over the well-being of patients, precisely what is happening in our school system where students are neglected.

Substantial savings can be made by easing structural coordination and network management, as well as by redirecting resources so as to provide direct services to the population, a frontline of sorts.

But the weakest link in Québec's healthcare system is precisely this front line, the very access to adequate health care. The most obvious occurrence of this problem is the fact that around 25% of Quebecers still don't have a family doctor. This situation is unacceptable and intolerable since it creates two categories of citizens: those with a family doctor (who can more readily obtain adequate health care) and those without (who must find their way through oftentimes a complex administrative labyrinth in order to obtain health care). A major, yet simple, restructuring of health care management is imperative.

To tackle the issue, the Coalition proposes a multilayered approach. We must adjust the list of incentives offered to key players, namely general practitioners, in order to foster the development of family medicine groups. We must also reduce the existing management structure and ensure that the funds thus freed are earmarked for

frontline healthcare services. Furthermore, there must be a thorough review of the current regulations pertaining to the financing of medical establishments.

We must have the courage of our convictions to do the right thing for all of Québec's families. The solutions to these problems are not unknown, but the political will to actually implement these solutions was missing – until now. Right now is the time to act.

## **A FEW FINDINGS**

The government of Québec invests roughly 45% of its budget annually into healthcare and social services. Thus, almost half of all taxpayers' contributions go into financing the healthcare system.

On the other hand, Québec has developed a complex network in order to meet the growing needs of the population. Spread out across 294 public healthcare establishments and more than 1,741 facilities, nearly 300,000 healthcare professionals dispense their services in every corner of the province.

General practitioners, specialists, nurses, pharmacists and other health professionals alike, can count on a solid education from Québec's colleges and universities, which maintain recognized standards of practice for delivering quality healthcare and social services to the population.

Thanks to these professionals and to our investments, the health of the population has improved significantly over the last 25 years, five years having been added to the life expectancy of the average Quebecer. When Quebecers have adequate access to health care, they can fully appreciate, first hand, the great dedication of healthcare professionals to their profession. This is undeniably something to be proud of.

However, in spite of our success, Québec's healthcare system is still confronted with many challenges. Two million Quebecers still don't have access to a family doctor. Overcrowded emergency rooms have become an all-too-common reality. According to statistics from the Health Ministry, the time spent on a stretcher was 17.4 hours in 2011 (as opposed to 16 hours in 2003), while hospital visits of 48 hours or more remain at an unacceptable level.

It is disturbing to see that this situation persists to this day, even though the root causes of the problem were identified long ago (deficient patient management, difficult access to specialized consultations, high concentration of 'long-term hospitalization' patients having to contend with 'short-term hospitalization' accommodation).

All the while, Québec's population is aging. In 2041, Quebecers aged 65 or more will constitute 28.4% of the population, compared to the current 15.9% (statistics for 2011), forecasting a sharp increase in both chronic diseases and correlating care. Our system will also have to provide services to meet the needs of senior citizens with limited mobility opting to remain in their own homes.

Another factor to take into account is the burden that prescription medication could represent for our healthcare system. Public coverage for prescription drugs is costly. During the last ten years, the prices for drugs have skyrocketed, increasing annually at a much faster rate than the cost of living, and higher than other government expenditures in health care. This escalation is disconcerting and could compromise the very future of Québec's prescription drug program.

Taking note of this situation, the Coalition suggested a series of solutions whose implementation demands a firm political will. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will take all the necessary means to ensure that every Quebecer has access to a family doctor, receives more services from regional healthcare agencies (CSSS), is admitted more rapidly into the hospital system, and can continue to benefit from an affordable prescription drug insurance program.

### **COMMITMENT 32: A FAMILY DOCTOR FOR ALL QUEBECERS**

It is unacceptable that for many Quebecers, today, the only way to receive medical attention is to show up at an overcrowded clinic without an appointment or the emergency room of a hospital. As well, too many patients must carry their own medical files within a complex healthcare system. Yet, with more than 8,000 general practitioners, Québec should have sufficient medical resources to service the whole population. However, in the present situation, general practitioners have little incentive to take on more patients, and the number of family medicine groups (GMF), including doctors, nurses and medical assistants, is insufficient and, often, they struggle amidst the bureaucratic apparatus.

The Coalition Avenir Québec Party will make sure that all Quebecers can benefit from a real, complete and responsible management of their medical follow-up by general practitioners.

To this end, the majority of family doctors will have to set themselves up as family medical groups (GMF) or similar models. As a matter of fact, it's about time to end the debate about the exact number of doctors in Québec. According to the Canadian Institute on Health Information (ICIS), in 2010, Québec had 110 family doctors per

100,000 inhabitants, which is more than the Canadian average of 103 doctors per 100,000 inhabitants. If each family doctor takes charge of an average of 1,000 patients, it is possible to cover the entire population (this number takes into consideration the workload of general practitioners in hospital settings, which represents around 40% of the total GP work load.)

A government of the Coalition Avenir Québec Party will therefore review the existing model of remuneration for general practitioners, so that part of it is linked to reaching a minimal number of patients under their supervision.

The number of patients under the supervision of each general practitioner will depend on the way his or her workload is spread. For example, general practitioners devoting 40% of their time in hospital settings could be asked to take charge of a minimum of 1,000 patients, while the ones working exclusively in GMF could be asked to take charge of 1,500 patients. This would make it possible to better cover patients' needs and to induce some general practitioners to increase their workload.

The Coalition will also make it possible for all family doctors to receive clinical and administrative support through nurses and administrative personnel. Nurses will play a more active role in performing follow-up of enrolled patients.

In order to allow the GMFs to fully play their role in delivering health care, the Coalition will make it possible for family doctors to be involved in their patients' hospitalization and treatment plan. Family doctors will quickly obtain a follow-up from the specialist via health service corridors and will be involved in planning their patients' discharge as well as the services their patients will need. Specialists will be asked to set aside more time to treat patients referred to them by family doctors. Also, the CSSS will be called upon to play a larger role in the establishment of alliances between groups of family doctors and the various health and social service organizations on their territory in order to facilitate and to allow for the entire population to be taken in charge.

### **COMMITMENT 33: MORE AUTONOMY FOR ESTABLISHMENTS**

In the recent years, the Ministry for Health and Social Services (MSSS) has intervened repeatedly in the daily internal management of establishments. As a result, the effect on the frontline actors has been a lack of accountability.

In the same way, health and social service agencies have been more deeply involved in managing establishments. Yet, since the beginning of local health and social service networks in 2004, their roles and responsibilities have always been vague, creating confusion and administrative redundancy.

It is evident that the healthcare and social service system has become bureaucratically burdensome. There are nearly 1,000 employees at the MSSS and more than 2,500 in agencies. That is a huge number!

As a matter of fact, a report from the Association québécoise d'établissements de santé et de services sociaux (AQESSS) on the network's governance is particularly revealing. According to that report, in spite of the many structural reorganizations, the roles and responsibilities of the different decision-making levels remain unclear and imprecise:

"Accountability, though necessary, has been exacerbated and has contributed to the malaise because many resources are used mainly to verify that the local level does indeed discharge its responsibilities. Consequently, the regional level is omnipresent in the management of establishments, notably by asking for countless reports of all kinds which, most often, end up on a shelf." <sup>(1)</sup>

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will reposition the functions of the MSSS to emphasize its basic mission, that is, to define ministerial directions, establish objectives, evaluate results, dispatch medical resources, and finance establishments based on their activities.

The Coalition proposes abolishing health and social service agencies, a decision level which is today unnecessary because it does not contribute to direct care for patients. On the other hand, the powers and resources of the 95 health and social service centres, as well as the other healthcare establishments, will be increased and they will take on more responsibilities. The administrators and managers of those establishments close to the frontline and, therefore, better positioned to find solutions, should benefit from more latitude in utilizing their budget and should be more accountable for results.

Created precisely to that end, the CSSS will be better positioned to coordinate their establishments' activities on their territory (including GMFs) in order to ascertain accessibility, continuity, and the quality of services earmarked for the population.

Being in a particular situation because of the high number of CSSS on its territory, the Montreal region will be placed under the umbrella of a flexible, regional structure of the Ministry. In the other regions of Québec, the health and social service centres will coordinate care and services, since they will be fully responsible for the health of the population on their territory.

(1) Free translation of La Gouvernance du Réseau de la Santé et des Services Sociaux : une révision des rôles et des responsabilités s'impose, Association d'établissements de santé et de services sociaux, octobre 2010, page 4.

In fact, the Coalition Avenir Québec proposes a fundamental review of the roles and responsibilities of the health and social services. This will translate into a real executive decentralization at the local level (CSSS) (and establishments such as hospitals, re-adaptation centres, youth centres, etc.) as well as alleviating the burden within the administrative structures.

Patients will benefit directly: the network will become more efficient and more flexible, and the savings emerging from this rationalization could be earmarked directly for services to the population.

### **COMMITMENT 34: REVIEW FUNDING GUIDELINE FOR ESTABLISHMENTS**

Each establishment's budget for health and social services to Quebecers is now based on the history of its expenses and is simply reapproved through the years with minor adjustments. This model is counterproductive and is not an incentive for establishments to improve accessibility, quality or efficiency in delivering health care: more services and more patients only create more expenses for the establishment. There must be change.

The Coalition will proceed with an in-depth review of this inefficient business model. For now on, the budget of such establishments will be established in accordance with the volume of care delivered to patients. This measure will not only make sure that financial resources are attributed according to the actual needs of the population, but also encourage efficiency on the part of establishments which will feel justified in increasing the volume of services delivered to the population. Instead of being a source of expenditure, the increase in the number of treated patients will be a source of additional revenues. This financial model will become an instrument for efficiency, accessibility and quality of care. In addition, with their new autonomy in decision-making vis-à-vis the organization and delivery of services, the establishments will become more accountable for balancing their budgets.

Furthermore, we know that doctors are unable to accomplish the volume of activity they wish to, especially in the case of surgeries. Some resources and equipment are not utilised optimally and, consequently, the waiting list gets longer and delays get worse.

The financial model for establishments proposed by the Coalition requires that general managements conclude agreements with specialists in order to determine a volume of activity based on the needs of the population they serve. These agreements will make doctors more responsible for the smooth running of their establishments and will determine part of their remuneration. On the other hand, establishment managements will guarantee doctors non-stop access to technical support centres, the integrity of

the agreed surgery timeframe and the adequate support of nurses and other medical professionals to perform these tasks. Finally, since the Ministry will be responsible for defining the general directions and the network's expected results, the costs related to these measures will not exceed those already established within the government's financial framework.

### **COMMITMENT 35: REVIEW THE PUBLIC PRESCRIPTION DRUG ASSURANCE PLAN**

The public prescription drug assurance plan is running low. In ten years, the cost for prescription drugs have skyrocketed to a yearly average much higher than economic growth and higher than other health-related spending. Consequently, from 1985 to 2010, spending for prescription drugs rose from 8.3% to 20% of total healthcare spending. Even if growth has slowed in the last years, it remains more significant in Québec (5.6% in 2009) than in the rest of Canada (3.6%).

The Coalition proposes, among other things, two simple and efficient measures to rein in the cost of prescription drugs. The first measure addresses the remuneration paid to pharmacists (around one billion dollars annually for services to the population). In Québec, patients' prescriptions are usually filled each month and pharmacists are paid on that basis. Prescriptions for patients whose medical condition is stable should be filled every three months, except in specific cases. This modification would generate considerable savings in the remuneration payable to pharmacists.

The second measure addresses non-generic drugs. In 1994, the government of Québec decided to promote the pharmaceutical industry and to allow a company marketing a new, innovative drug to receive a guaranteed price for 15 years, even if a generic drug was available at a lesser price. In the beginning, the goal of this 15-year rule was to favour innovative pharmaceutical companies already in Québec. However, the operations of these companies have considerably diminished since then, so much so that this incentive is no longer justified.

The Canadian performance in research and development is, in fact, among the worst within the OCDE, at 6.9% of the pharmaceutical industry's revenues (compared to 16.4% in France, 19.4% in the USA and, 30.7% in Sweden). The Coalition wants to abolish this 15-year rule and proposes instead to encourage pharmaceutical research and development through fiscal measures beneficial to companies that maintain or increase their investments in research and development in Québec.

Just as many other Canadian provinces do, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will strongly emphasize the use of generic drugs within the Québec prescription drug insurance program plan.

## **COMMITMENT 36: FOCUS ON PREVENTION**

The quality, organization, and financing of health care and social services are not the sole means to combat illnesses. For years, we have recognized that prevention can play a major role in maintaining and even improving the health of Québec's population, thus substantially reducing the cost of our healthcare system. Though we all acknowledge the well-founded wisdom of investing in prevention, this research domain has paradoxically remained the most underfunded area of our healthcare and social service system.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will remedy this situation by implementing the most ambitious prevention program that Québec has ever known. We will invest massively in prevention in order to foster physical activities for the greatest number of Quebecers.

The youth will be specifically targeted by this program centered on promoting healthy habits within the school system. Adults will also be encouraged to adopt and maintain beneficial and healthy physical activities. A tax credit will be available to people who regularly enrol and participate in physical training programs in authorized facilities.

In addition, fiscal measures will be offered to companies that encourage the regular practice of physical activities among their employees. Already, companies that invest in the construction of a sport facility within the workplace benefit from a corporate rate fiscal deduction. The Coalition goes further and will allow the cost of enrolment in physical activity programs in authorized facilities to be totally deductible under the expenses chapter for businesses.

Finally, all healthcare and social service centres, in collaboration with community organizations, will have to take preventive actions not only among the general population but also more specifically among more vulnerable population groups such as young families, victimized women and problem youths. These programs will take place in disadvantaged areas. The family medicine groups (GMF), all of whose members participate in the enrolled patients' medical follow-up, will also have the mandate to increase preventive clinical practice.

## **COMMITMENT 37: MORE SUPPORT TO SPORT ORGANIZATIONS TO IMPROVE QUEBECERS' HEALTH**

Prevention and healthy habits must in turn be supported by concrete local actions and sports federations from all areas. Organized sports in Québec, in school, at the municipal level or in specialized clubs must be better supported in order to offer more well-organized activities in safe and adequate quarters. Government spending in

this area is in fact an investment that will yield huge results for Québec, financially and socially.

More than 900,000 people are members of sports federations in Québec. These federations provide recreational and competitive activities and also guide and support our top athletes. They have a direct impact on the good health of all sports fans in Québec and can, if given the means, play a larger role in improving the health of all those who have not yet included sport in their lifestyle. The Liberal government did not think it necessary to review the governmental framework for sports that is 15 years old. It's about time to act and properly define Québec's strategy in this matter.

The Coalition will also maintain, over the long term, actual investments in sport infrastructure, ensuring that participants practice sports in adequate facilities. In this area, as in all other areas of State intervention, financial help for infrastructure projects will be allocated based on strictly objective and non-partisan criteria.

### **COMMITMENT 38: THE TECHNOLOGY TURN**

The healthcare network must embrace twenty-first century technology. Indeed, medical methods and techniques are constantly evolving, thus compelling medical establishments to acquire more advanced technology. However, new technologies must not serve medical care only. We must face the future and seriously research the multiple ways technology can serve patients and medical personnel as well.

A first crucial step is the implementation of a personal electronic health record for each Quebecer. It is about time for Québec to acquire such an essential tool in order to ensure a rigorous follow-up of patients' health, avoid errors in diagnosis and treatment plans, manage coordination among various medical staff, and simplify information transfer among them. Efforts made so far have unfortunately been inefficient and lacking in rigour, resulting in a waste of time and considerable overspending. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will take over this process and will implement it rigorously, quickly, and at the best possible cost.

A Coalition government will also encourage the use of communication and information technologies to improve other aspects of the healthcare system and facilitate the patients' life. The same is true for clinical decisions regarding the main pathologies which can benefit more and more from reliable software programs capable of reducing errors. Communications between patients, professionals and establishments within the network would benefit as well from a greater use of technologies, for instance in scheduling appointments or monitoring the waiting periods in clinics and emergency rooms.

Advanced technologies can also be used to follow up on out-patients' health progress at low cost. They make it possible to prevent complications and generate important savings through early intervention at the first sign of complications. Just think about the monitoring of out-patients' blood pressure readings and glycaemia levels or a patient's weight as affected by a congestive cardiac illness.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government is committed to the use of technology in delivering health care. First and foremost, it will rigorously and quickly implement an electronic health record for each Quebecer at the best cost and see that all actors in the Québec healthcare network (establishments, clinics, pharmacies, doctors, etc.) adopt it.

A Coalition government will also emphasize the use of information and communication technologies to improve patients' file management, support for clinical decisions for the more current pathologies, communications with patients, including appointment scheduling, as well as patients' follow-up and execution of treatment plans.

### **COMMITMENT 39: PILOT PROJECT ON PUBLIC/PRIVATE HEALTHCARE**

According to Québec Health Care Law, doctors must generally choose public practice or withdraw completely to the private sector. They cannot have a mixed practice, that is, work in the public sector while treating patients outside this sector. Yet, in most industrialized countries, including France and the Scandinavian countries, healthcare systems allow, to a certain degree, a mixed practice of medicine. This mixed practice is said to offer more alternatives to people whose healthcare demands cannot be met by the public system.

To test the efficiency of a public-private practice, the Coalition Avenir Québec Party proposes to develop in the National Capital region a pilot project in which doctors could be paid by the private sector after they have accomplished a sufficient number of hours in a public establishment.

To be conclusive, this project must clearly show the benefits of the private sector's presence and demonstrate that those benefits are not detrimental to the quality or accessibility of care in the public sector. That condition is fundamental: the private sector must not, in any shape, way or form, be detrimental to the public system, including doctors' availability.

## **COMMITMENT 40: BETTER ACCESS TO SPECIALIZED CARE**

Access to specialized medical care within a reasonable timeframe is a matter of concern for many Quebecers. Too often, the long delays patients must put up with are due to a deficient organization of the healthcare network. A rigid network which promotes an identical procedure for all cases penalizes many patients.

It is possible to speed access and ensure the quality of specialized care by emphasizing innovation and productivity. In certain cases, partnerships with specialized, affiliated clinics would allow the public network to improve healthcare accessibility and speed. Those clinics often share expertise and effective equipment that improve productivity. By concentrating certain ambulatory surgeries in such specialized clinics, we can increase the volume of care and therefore treat more patients in a reasonable timeframe.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will therefore foster the creation of such specialized clinics affiliated to the public sector for some ambulatory surgeries. This will decrease the waiting list for these surgeries while offering patients health care through cutting edge medical and technological developments.

## **Families and seniors: accessible services for all**

Support to families and seniors must be a priority of any modern government. This not only the way to reaffirm a vision of society based on solidarity, but also an investment for the future.

A government of the Coalition Avenir Québec will take all its responsibilities in this area. The Coalition will first consolidate our past gains by completing the network of Centres de la petite enfance (CPE), in order to guaranty access to all families that need it. In addition, the Coalition will extend to all employees in the private sector the right to be absent from work for family obligations

At the same time, the Coalition will make changes to guaranty a better quality of care to seniors. Financial insecurity, vulnerability and low quality, poorly adapted care are the lot of too many seniors who built our society. The lack of adequate services such as assistance to help them stay in their home is chronic. The lack of resources and personnel impacts the quality of care provided in the CHSLD and, doesn't meet the level of gratitude that Québec should extend to the ones who built our country. In short, daily lot of seniors in Québec is not what it should be.

Some actions on many fronts must be implemented in order to improve the situation and guaranty a decent quality of life to seniors. Other actions must also be undertaken to help Quebecers better plan their retirement and collectively benefit from the contribution of experienced workers.

A government of the Coalition Avenir Québec will take the necessary means to improve this situation.

#### **COMMITMENT 41: TIGHTENING THE MANAGEMENT OF OUR 7\$ DAYCARE NETWORK**

Development of daycare centers is both an indispensable policy to foster work-family conciliation and an important link in the Québec education network. Too many children arrive in the school system with developmental delays very difficult if not impossible to catch up. Going through a child care system offering a comprehensive and challenging educational program is for many of them a unique opportunity.

But if the network of daycare services at reduced rates is a major contribution to the quality of life for families, its implementation has however suffered many failures, and the rigor that is required as part of program involving a great deal of public money has not always been present.

The granting of new places has been so chaotic and unfortunately in often unclear conditions. The lack of real planning and the lax enforcement of rules have hindered the coherent and orderly development of daycare services. The increase in daily costs has not been guided by clear principles. Moreover, as recently lamented the Auditor General, no monitoring of educational programs is done by the Department of Families, and once their license obtained, child care services are not required to follow them.

Funding for the network of low-cost daycare was also weighed down with years. The daily cost of a child care space at reduced rates has been outbid in the past election. Québec parents remember the promise of the Liberal Party during the 2003 election not to raise this rate then set at \$ 5. This promise was broken in the weeks following the election.

Another problem of the current system that causes many frustrations among young parents concerns the management of waiting lists. Many indications tend to believe that the mechanism for managing child care spaces could be improved.

In short, a shift is needed. The wheeling and dealing that has characterized the development of daycare must give way to a much more rigorous, coherent and articulated vision of their role.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will therefore put forward an action plan structured around clear principles and rules to complement the development of child care system in Québec. This action plan will create a precise inventory of the needs and offer a firm timetable to fill them. Its priorities will be:

- depoliticize the allocation of permits by establishing a clear and transparent mechanism
- ensure that new subsidized spaces are being created in disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- monitor the implementation of the educational programs of CPE and daycare
- indexing the cost of the network places of low-cost daycare by limiting their growth to that of the index of cost of living
- make more flexible schedules to meet the needs of parents who live in increasingly diverse situations

To better meet the needs of parents, the Coalition also proposes to recognize daycare as an essential service in order to mark the right to strike and lockout and avoid that parents can be held hostages by labor disputes or claims made to the government. Parents, as the Coalition, respect the right to strike of teachers, but the repeated walkouts, which have major consequences in the lives of Quebecers, have become unacceptable. Beyond its pragmatism, this measure is also a way to recognize daycare services as a fundamental task of the state and place them at the same level as education, of which they constitute an important strategic pillar.

#### **COMMITMENT 42: DAYCARE NETWORK DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN**

Our society has made important progress in methods of accommodating work and family. The implementation of paid time at home for parents is a good example. The universal character of this program makes it quite beneficial: it is accessible to everyone, no matter what your situation in the workforce.

Such is not the case in Québec concerning leave of absence for family obligations. The Loi sur les normes minimales de travail states that an employee can take ten days off, at his or her own expense, to care for a family member. The Coalition believes that this disposition must be modified in order to take into consideration changes in Québec society. The massive participation of men and women in the workforce implies that either one of the two parents must sometimes be absent from work in order to care for children, especially in cases of health-related problems. In addition, an aging population inevitably creates a heavier load of responsibilities toward senior citizens.

Their children are better suited to support and care for them when necessary, which sometimes prevents them from being at work.

The right to paid leave of absence for family obligations is already in place for public employees, but private-sector employees can generally not take advantage of this program. This is an injustice that the Coalition wants to correct.

After consultation with all parties in the workforce, a Coalition government will modify the Loi sur les normes de travail in order to allow each worker in Québec with a child aged 6 years or younger to have five paid days every year for parental responsibilities.

Those five days will be in addition to the 10 unpaid days already stated in the Law.

This measure is an important part of the Coalition's policy on work-family conciliation.

#### **COMMITMENT 43: HELP TOWARDS HOME OWNERSHIP**

One of the dearest wishes of young families is to own property. However, reaching this goal is often difficult because of the financial burden related to such a project (transfer rights, notary fees, etc.) The Coalition believes that it is necessary to help young families towards home ownership by eliminating all or some of those costs. Indeed, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will put forward measures to facilitate access to home ownership.

#### **COMMITMENT 44: HOMECARE PRIORITY**

Controlling the cost of health care and social services for an aging population means investing properly. A priority for the Coalition Avenir Québec Party is home care together with keeping seniors and people with reduced mobility in their own home as opposed to keeping them in facilities for long-term care. Such measures not only have a fundamental impact on the quality of life of those populations, but they also are less costly. For an equal level of care, it is many times less costly to keep someone in the comfort of his or her home (even if the homes must be adapted) than living in a facility providing long-term care.

Actors in the field of health care, researchers in service planning and medical associations support these kinds of financial and organizational principles but, so far, the network has taken a very timid approach towards health care changes adapted to services in the home. The actual spending structure (a total of 80% in institutional and non-institutional settings and less than 20% in at-home care) is counter-performing. In its latest document addressing aging, the Québec Association for health care and social services has taken a stand against this situation.

Although investments in hospital resources are partly interchangeable with an increased offer of at-home services, budgets for at-home care and maintaining people in their home will have to be increased and periodically updated to take into account changing needs. This budget realignment constitutes, in the long run, a saving measure. The rules of access and financing for housing and at-home assistance will also have to be reviewed to take into consideration the real needs and the various functional capacity which vary considerably depending on the clientele. We must also determine an adequate level of financing for informal caregivers whose invaluable contribution must be recognized. In order to intervene quickly in case of a problem or the rapid deterioration of a patient's health, we will also have to resort to the existing technological measures in an optimal way in order to follow up on a person's psychological functions between staff visits.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government is committed to making at-home care its utmost priority in the area of services to senior citizens. Not only will we thus be able to significantly increase the quality of life and general health of patients but also to minimize the impact of an aging population. To this end the Coalition is committed to:

- increasing the budget for home care and maintaining senior citizens in their home, including support for informal caregivers ;
- implementing measures to monitor the psychological functions of people receiving home care in order to rapidly intervene in case of health deterioration and provide for their security;
- reviewing rules for access and financing for housing and support to home care while taking into account the real needs and functional ability of the various clientele;
- introducing rules for periodical re-evaluation of home care budgets in order to meet the increased demand caused by an aging population.

#### **COMMITMENT 45: QUALITY CARE FOR SENIORS**

The Protecteur du citoyen (ombudsman), the media, as well as families, everyone deplores the poor quality of treatment and the lack of care that our seniors have to suffer, housed in home centres providing long-term care (CHSLD) or in private residences. Although there seems to be no doubt that the majority of CHSLD and their staff members are competent, diligent and generous, every case of abuse, carelessness or negligence is one too many.

In addition to the necessary increase in the number and frequency of inspections, it is also important to implement a clear and efficient accountability process, to make

managers responsible and impose sanctions in cases of negligence or refusal to conform to applicable norms.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will make it mandatory for CSSS to report every year to the Health and Social Services Ministry on how they spend the funds allocated in their budget for senior citizens.

Finally, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will create a reference centre, in order to help, in particular, those living in a private residence negotiate their lease agreement with their landlord. A recent study from Marie-Annick Grégoire, a professor at the University of Montréal Law School, has determined that these lease agreements, often-times, contain many abusive or illegal clauses. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will move quickly in order to end such abuse, first by providing adequate resources to senior citizens and then by hiring inspectors specially assigned to that end.

#### **COMMITMENT 46: EMPLOYMENT-RETIREMENT CONCILIATION POLICY**

The premature departure of many senior citizens from the workforce creates an important social and financial loss. The Coalition Avenir Québec Party is committed to fostering workers' involvement in the workforce as long as possible by implementing a comprehensive policy to conciliate work and retirement.

Tailored according to the principle allowing senior citizens to remain active as they cut down their work hours, this policy will ease the transition towards retirement and will allow businesses to better plan for their employees' knowledge and skills transfer. Some more flexible forms of involvement in the workforce will allow older workers to assist their loved ones and to alleviate their work schedule.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will therefore implement a policy to conciliate work and retirement, allowing older workers wishing to do so to remain in the workforce as they cut down on their hours at work. With employers, one aspect of this policy will provide for the organization of more flexible forms of participation in the job market. These measures will be implemented so as to minimize fiscal repercussions.

Québec must learn to retain and take advantage of seniors' expertise and experience. Indeed, the social and economic advantages of a work-retirement conciliation policy are important. Québec has waited too long before taking this route. Indeed, such a policy will create a win-win situation for seniors and all of the Québec.

#### **COMMITMENT 47: A TRUE VOLUNTARY SAVINGS PLAN**

An essential way to improve the situation of our senior citizens in the future is the generalization of savings. The public plans (Québec pension plan and the federal government's pension plan) are less and less successful and adequate in their present operation in meeting the needs of seniors. The difficulty resides is that nearly 60% of Quebecers don't have any complementary retirement plan, either from the government or from the private sector, with predetermined payments. This situation is of special concern. In an attempt to remedy this problem, the present government has proposed the implementation of the program RVER (voluntary retirement savings plan). This solution is inadequate. It presupposes a complete decentralization of these new plans, the implementation of which is full of difficulties. For example, how to implement retirement plans in very small businesses? How to avoid and justify disparities in the yields of workers in small and large businesses, the latter being in a better position to negotiate the terms of their retirement plans with financial institutions? But, most importantly, how to truly guarantee the security of these plans?

The Coalition Avenir Québec Party believes it is imperative to challenge the foreseeable problems related to the very low level of savings of a large segment of workers. But, a Coalition government's approach will differ from that of the RVER program; it will implement a voluntary retirement savings program administered by the *Régie des rentes du Québec*. The centralization of the program will reduce costs and guarantee its transparency. It will also guarantee its security. This simple and flexible program will allow workers without any complementary retirement plan to contribute more to the Régie des rentes if they so wish. The fund will be created with this goal in mind and will allow all workers in that situation to benefit from all the advantages related to the collective pooling of savings, especially yields. The implementation of this plan must be done with the workers in mind, not the interest of financial institutions.

#### **COMMITMENT 48: A SIMPLIFIED INCOME TAX FOR SENIORS**

The government should make it a point to reduce the burden of bureaucracy for citizens. This principle applies especially to seniors, for whom this often represents an important source of concern and difficulties. Although some efforts have been made recently to simplify the income tax form of some seniors (by introducing a pre-filled tax form) much improvement needs to be done. Yet, the financial situation and the sources of revenue of most seniors are such that filling a standard declaration of revenue versus filling a largely simplified one has no financial relevance for the State or the taxpayer.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will introduce an income tax form greatly simplified for people aged 65 or more who declare no capital gains, no income from employment, rental, dividends, business income or commissions and who do not claim the application of certain credits or deductions.

According to estimates of the Québec Association for retired and pre-retired people (AQDR), around 600,000 people aged 65 or more, which is about half this group, could take advantage of such a measure.

#### **COMMITMENT 49: THE RIGHT TO DIE WITH DIGNITY**

The right to die with dignity has long been debated in Québec: in families, among friends, in the medical establishments. No other debate has been conducted with more maturity and respect for Quebecers' and universal values of respect for human dignity than the one recently conducted by the *Commission spéciale Mourir dans la dignité*, made up of National Assembly members from all political parties.

Experts agree on the necessity for Québec society to take an important step towards giving top priority to palliative care within our healthcare system. This allows patients who so wish to remain in their homes and improve their quality of life at the end of their life. The accessibility of palliative care also reassures patients and their loved ones, giving them the option to live out their last moments in a more serene atmosphere. The Commission spéciale also acknowledges the limits of palliative care; it also recognizes that, in exceptional cases, some measures for medical assistance to die are legitimate, provided they be well guided and in accordance with the terminally ill patients' will.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will implement the entire recommendations contained in the March 22, 2012 report of the Commission spéciale *Mourir dans la dignité*.

# THE ECONOMY: A TRUE PLAN FOR ALL QUÉBEC REGIONS

Economic growth is the means by which the dreams Quebecers have today will become a reality tomorrow. A fair and generous society must have the means to achieve its ambitions. However, the diagnosis for Québec's economic performance is concerning. If something does not change, Québec will soon be without the means to maintain its citizens' quality of life.

Québec can and must do better. And its government must be equal to the task by ensuring that all economic players, businesses and labour force participants deliver on their full potential.

The Coalition's economic plan centres on the aim of building a Québec economy of owners, not tenants. Quebecers must reclaim their place as masters of their economic development.

The economy's dynamism must be ensured. Entrepreneurship and innovation are two essential driving forces for Québec's economy. The Coalition believes that the time has come for Québec to have a tangible entrepreneurship policy and to support innovation the way it deserves to be supported.

It is also important to remember that a nation's primary source of wealth lies in its human capital. Technological development and the aging population have changed the situation. The contribution of all citizens to Québec's development is crucial. Québec's economic performance is directly related to that of its labour force. To ensure that all citizens can fully contribute to Québec's development, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will implement a modern full employment policy focused on promoting continuing education, addressing drop-out rates, successfully integrating immigrants into the labour market and developing a policy on work-retirement balance.

## TWO CONCOMITANT OBJECTIVES

The Coalition's economic plan is also based on a fundamental principle. The Coalition believes that it is time to put a stop to the pointless opposition that has too long dominated public debate on economic development and environmental protection. This archaic vision has no place in the modern world. The Coalition has therefore included its environmental policy in the broader framework of Québec's economic and energy development. The Coalition believes that rather than being opposing forces, economic

development and environmental protection go hand-in-hand, the achievement of one complementing and strengthening the other.

The Coalition is therefore first and foremost committed to sustainable development. Negligence in protecting the environment is not only contrary to Quebecers' values, but is also economically foolish. The economic and social costs of pollution and environmental degradation are a major obstacle to a society's long-term economic development. Conserving energy and developing public transportation are therefore not only rational resource management measures, but also an irrefutable driver for economic progress.

### **MASTERS OF OUR OWN DOMAIN**

Quebecers must remain masters of their own domain in terms of the use of their natural resources. This means that decisions related to developing resources must be made in Québec by Quebecers. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will reinstate the Caisse de dépôt et de placement du Québec's initial mandate to be a source of profit for the Québec economy. The Coalition will also create a capitalized natural resources development fund to enable Quebecers to be equal partners with foreign companies developing natural resources in Québec. It will transform Investissement Québec to attract prime investors to the province. Finally, it will reinforce the role and authority of regional economic development bodies to better support entrepreneurs throughout Québec.

The Plan Nord is a hot topic. While it is true that developing energy and natural resources in Northern Québec represents an exceptional opportunity for economic growth in the coming decades, in its current form, the Plan Nord may deprive Quebecers of the full benefits of these activities, in addition to making us bear the burden of infrastructure spending and depleting our energy resources.

The Coalition's approach aims to ensure that Quebecers are the ones who benefit most from the development of the North's natural resources and that any development is done in such a way as to protect Québec's environment and long-term economic development. Above all, the Coalition is promoting a true development plan for all regions of Québec, not just the North, because it is going to take more than slogans and marketing pitches to resolve the economic problems of Trois-Rivières, Matane, Saint-Hyacinthe or Montréal.

## **TOWARD AN OWNERS' ECONOMY**

The Quiet Revolution was a turning point in the implementation of a modern economic development policy in Québec as Quebecers came to possess major economic levers,

particularly thanks to the creation of the Caisse de dépôt et de placement du Québec (CPDQ) and the nationalization of the hydropower industry. The era also saw exceptional progress in education for Quebecers with the introduction of a modern, accessible education system. Finally, the rise of a business class in the French-speaking majority resulted in the promise of all future major economic decisions being made by those most attuned to Québec's economic interests.

However, this model, which allowed Québec to "catch up" economically in the past few decades, is showing signs of fatigue.

### **A SLUGGISH ECONOMY**

Québec's economic performance is not what it should be. Though Quebecers' standard of living has increased, Québec's economic position is deteriorating compared to the rest of Canada, the United States and numerous European countries. The reality is alarming. The gaps between Québec and Canada's richest provinces are increasing and even the poorest provinces are catching up to us.

The recent evolution in the unemployment rate, particularly in Québec and Ontario, should fool no one. Employment rates remain low in Québec and in the rest of Canada, and quality jobs are few and far between on the labour market. Given the circumstances, numerous qualified immigrants are choosing not to move to Québec or are leaving to find better jobs elsewhere, thereby contributing to the demographic decline in Québec, which represented only 23.6% of Canada's population in 2011.

Québec's economic productivity is insufficient. There are four main factors behind this situation. The first is weak private investments in Québec businesses. In 2010, investments were \$6,600 per worker, compared to over \$13,250 in the United States. While our competitors are investing in improving their productivity, the lack of investment in modern equipment and technology threatens to have a negative, lasting impact on the Québec economy's competitiveness. The second factor is the lack of vision and consistency in Québec's economic development policy. Major economic levers such as the Caisse de dépôt et de placement du Québec (CPDQ) and Investissement-Québec (IQ) are underutilized, thereby failing to support Québec businesses, particularly those at the regional level.

Another problem facing Québec's economy is the lack of continuing education, resulting in a labour force that is unable to sufficiently meet market needs. In a knowledge economy, this situation is beyond problematic. Québec must mine all the talent and ability available in order to develop and major challenges await. The drop-out rate

in Québec is far too high, university and college graduates are far too few, and the unemployment rate for immigrants is unacceptable.

The final factor hindering Québec's economic performance is the low employment rate, particularly among workers aged 55 and older. In recent years, countries known for their generous social policies and quality of life have implemented measures to allow these workers to continue contributing to the labour market. The major decline in the population of labour force age (18 to 64 years old), expected to drop from 68% to 58% in the next 10 years, means that open debate on the issue is inevitable.

In sum, Québec's economic problems are serious and its current development rests on a highly unstable foundation. The red flags are everywhere: lack of private investment, high drop-out rate, insufficient continuing education, lack of quality jobs, lower average income than elsewhere in Canada and so on. If nothing is done to improve Québec's economic productivity and its competitiveness, in the short term, Québec will no longer be able to compete in external markets and secure funding for the services that have contributed to ensuring its citizens' quality of life.

Québec's weaknesses make it vulnerable. An aging population, increased competition from Québec's competitors at the international level and the breakneck speed of technological evolution all lead to one irrefutable conclusion: if Québec cannot reinvigorate its development strategy, it is at risk of missing the economic shift it needs to make to ensure its prosperity and maintain its social entitlements. Given the fundamental issues at stake, we can no longer settle for short-sighted measures. We must build a firm foundation for our economic development.

The Coalition Avenir Québec's economic action plan is therefore based on a simple premise: the State must use all its tools to their maximum potential to foster economic development for and by Quebecers.

## **FULL POTENTIAL FOR ALL**

A successful economic strategy must take into account the context in which it is implemented. Québec's current realities are not those of decades past. The rapid pace of technological change requires today's labour force to be more qualified than its predecessors and committed to continuing education. The aging population translates into a decline in the population of labour force age and labour shortages in several sectors. Immigration, a key component of Québec's demographic policy, presents unprecedented challenges in terms of integration into the labour market.

The concept of full employment no longer has the same meaning in a contemporary context. In the past, it mainly referred to an economy's capacity to absorb labour supply and its success was measured based on data such as employment and unemployment rates. The problem that modern economies, like Québec's, will soon face is not that of a labour surplus, but of a labour shortage. When the relative proportion of active workers in Québec declines significantly compared to the overall population, several sectors will see their development hindered by a lack of qualified labour.

The Coalition Avenir Québec's full employment policy will have clear objectives: improving the employability of workers through better education and increasing employment rates in certain categories of workers, particularly those aged 55 to 64 and immigrants. For the Coalition, full employment means a situation where everyone delivers on their full potential, which is what Québec needs if it wants to develop its economy and maintain its citizens' quality of life.

#### **COMMITMENT 50: INCREASED CDPQ INVESTMENTS IN QUÉBEC**

Quebecers need to take back ownership of their economy. By reclaiming what is ours, our entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to use their talent to benefit Québec. Economic decisions will be reoriented towards profitable, long-term investments rather than short-term gains, and natural resources will be used for the collective wealth of Québec's citizens.

The Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ) must resume its role as a major player in our economy. The Caisse is Québec's single most important financial institution. It must pursue the mandate it has had since its inception, namely, to responsibly manage Quebecers' collective assets. But economic development must also be at the heart of its mission.

Change is essential. According to the most recent figures from December 31, 2010, the Caisse invested only 2.3% of its asset base (\$4.2 billion of a total \$183.2 billion) in the share capital of private Québec businesses. It is vital that the Caisse substantially increase its investments in Québec businesses, particularly to ensure that key decision centres remain in Québec. Several major companies have moved their headquarters out of Québec in recent years. Between 2000 and 2008, for example, the number dropped from 92 to 77 in Montréal. The recent Astral transaction and Rona's purchase offer are examples that clearly illustrate this phenomenon.

We cannot even begin to express how disastrous this situation could be for Québec. The departure of decision centres means the loss of high-level jobs, the erosion of

critical masses of expertise, the decrease of related economic activities and, above all, the geographical and psychological distancing of economic decision-makers from Québec's interests. A large number of SMEs depend on these feathers in Québec's cap. The Caisse must take action to help our managers continue to run major companies in Québec — and in French — rather than leaving to do so elsewhere.

A Coalition Avenir Québec will ensure that the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec is a major player in our economy by responsibly increasing the percentage of its investments in Québec businesses, investments that will be made completely independently of political institutions.

### **COMMITMENT 51: CREATING A NATURAL RESOURCES FUND**

Quebecers will never reap the benefits to which they are entitled from the development of their natural resources if they settle for collecting exploration rights and royalties, as set out in the current version of the Plan Nord. To fully profit from its riches and ensure development that is in line with its interests, Québec must, through the Caisse de dépôt et de placement, hold strategic minority interests in development projects.

To ensure that Quebecers reap the full benefits of natural resources development, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will create a Québec natural resources development fund, administered by the Caisse de dépôt et de placement.

The purpose of the new specialized portfolio, initially capitalized at \$5 billion, financed by the Caisse de dépôt et de placement, a public offering and tax-advantaged funds (Capital régional coopératif Desjardins, Fonds de solidarité FTQ and Fondation CSN), will be to acquire minority interests in major natural resource development projects in Québec. Quebecers who want to invest in the fund will be able to do so through contributions to an RRSP and tax-advantaged funds. Because the Caisse's major depositors have a limited capacity in terms of net deposits, the new portfolio will primarily be financed through the reallocation of their existing holdings in compliance with each major depositor's risk profile.

Through the creation of the fund, all Quebecers will directly benefit from the economic advantages of developing our natural resources. Furthermore, through minority interests, it will now be possible to influence companies' decisions in order to better protect the environment and preserve Quebecers' long-term economic interests, particularly at the regional level, ensuring that major processing activities are an integral part of natural resource development projects in Québec.

## **COMMITMENT 52: INCREASED SUPPORT FOR INNOVATION**

Technological innovation drives the modern economy; Québec therefore has no choice but to excel in this area. Training highly qualified labour and developing centres of technological excellence in collaboration with the academic sector are essential pillars for an innovation policy in Québec.

To ensure that Quebecers are not only consumers but also producers of innovation, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will provide Québec businesses with the necessary tax incentives to increase investments in technology.

Corporate taxation is complex and multi-faceted and includes a series of exemptions, deferral opportunities, amortization on assets and expense deductions, as well as a host of tax credits. There are 95 tax credits in all, amounting to \$4 billion and including credits for research and development.

These various tax measures have contributed to the development of new technologies in Québec, particularly in Montréal (videogame industry, multimedia, etc.). However, the Coalition feels that it is time to re-evaluate the effectiveness of these measures and reallocate the money saved to improve tax incentives for companies that invest in technology. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will also promote investment funds that are open to public offering and support technology companies. In both cases, support and specific measures will be available for these companies' crucial start-up phase.

Québec caught the technological wave in the 1990s. Now it is time to ride the next wave by supporting innovation as never before. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will aim to award 2.5% of contracts to Québec SMEs that develop new technology. This approach is used by Small Business Innovation and Research to foster the growth of innovative American companies. Other countries, including Japan, Australia and Sweden have followed suit.

## **COMMITMENT 53: INCREASED INVESTMENT IN QUÉBEC**

Economies worldwide are increasingly competitive and seeking to attract the most dynamic companies. The States are facing fierce competition and are sparing no effort to woo global investors.

Québec is currently losing this game. Those who represent us with global investors do not have effective means to succeed. Moreover, at the international level, Québec's voice is discordant, primarily because of overlapping among the main stakeholders (departments, government corporations, regional players, etc.). Québec therefore

urgently needs a targeted, consistent policy for soliciting foreign companies and stimulating investment in Québec.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will mandate Investissement Québec to manage and coordinate international solicitation, thereby adopting a single-window approach in this area and giving Investissement Québec the necessary means to strengthen its performance in international solicitation to maximize effectiveness.

#### **COMMITMENT 54: CONQUERING NEW MARKETS**

The Québec economy is open to the world. Our exports total approximately \$60 billion annually. Quebecers have played their cards right in the free trade game. Our companies and workers have benefited from access to world markets. Competition is fierce, but it forces Quebecers to be creative and productive, constantly surpassing our own goals.

Québec's economic development depends on companies that will be able to conquer new markets. World markets, Asia in particular, represent a major opportunity for openness that cannot be ignored, and the government must create as many opportunities as possible so that everyone benefits. To support the efforts of Québec companies, on which our economic prosperity depends, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will reach agreements with tax-advantaged funds (FTQ, CSN and Desjardins) to add a new mandate specifically targeting start-ups and foreign marketing of Québec products.

#### **COMMITMENT 55: DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN QUÉBEC**

Economic prosperity depends on a constant supply of new blood. Younger generations infuse the Québec economy with the dynamic energy it needs to adapt to increasingly rapid changes.

It is also thanks in large part to its entrepreneurs that Québec has succeeded in building a prosperous economy over the last 50 years. Unfortunately, the rate of entrepreneurship is on the decline in Québec. This rate, which corresponds to the number of entrepreneurs within the population aged 15 to 79, dropped from 3.4% in 1987 to 2.9% in 2008. The proportion of new companies in Québec dropped from 14.6% in 1991 to 11.2% in 2006. In Ontario, this number was at 15.1% in 2006 and had been growing since 1991. Also concerning is that only 7.4% of Quebecers plan to start a new company or continue operating an existing company in the next 10 years, whereas the rate is almost double for Canadians at 13.5%.

These statistics are concerning. To reverse this trend, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will establish an entrepreneurship development plan. The plan's parameters

will be defined with stakeholders from the education sector, entrepreneurs and government representatives and the plan itself will make Québec a figurative construction site for the development of skills and entrepreneurial culture. The policy will aim to integrate into Québec's educational curriculum entrepreneurship awareness courses and encourage educational institutions to offer students extracurricular activities around this theme, as well as "entrepreneurship-study" programs. Particular attention will be paid to technical or scientific research projects and the means to transform them into entrepreneurial proposals. The initiative will also include international internships to develop our future entrepreneurs' awareness of and skills in marketing.

The Coalition Avenir Québec's entrepreneurship development plan will place considerable focus on having experienced entrepreneurs mentor the next generation and encouraging mentors to participate in start-ups' share capital.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will also make start-up capital available to companies, specifically through Investissement Québec and accessible across the province.

#### **COMMITMENT 56: BUSINESS SUCCESSION (NEXT GENERATION OR EMPLOYEES)**

Business succession is a major challenge for the Québec economy: 30% of Québec business owners will retire by 2018, which is twice the entry rate of new entrepreneurs (16.5%). One solution to this problem is to ensure business continuity. Note that 60% of entrepreneurs aged 55 to 64 have yet to discuss succession with their families or associates. Furthermore, the tax treatment currently applicable to capital gains deters transfers to children or employees.

The situation is concerning. A lack of succession can result in a business disappearing or being sold to international stakeholders. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will implement measures to facilitate entrepreneurial continuity within Québec SMEs, particularly by modifying regulations to encourage the transfer of a business to family, employees or friends living in Québec.

#### **COMMITMENT 57: INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF OLDER WORKERS IN THE LABOUR MARKET**

The employment rate for older Québec workers, specifically those aged 55 to 64, is one of the lowest in the world. When a population is growing, this problem is less of an issue. However, given Québec's aging population, we can no longer afford to debate. The growth of our economy and prosperity of our population depends on us taking action.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will open dialogue on this issue immediately after it is elected. Though there are those who only see the negative side of an aging population, the Coalition considers that the situation can be used to Québec's advantage by mining the best of our seniors' expertise and experience. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will therefore develop an integrated retirement-work balance policy to help more Quebecers remain in the labour market longer. One of the components of this policy will focus on organizing, in collaboration with Québec companies, more flexible options for participating in the labour market. These options will allow older workers to remain active in the market as long as possible and transfer their knowledge and skills to younger workers. They will also give older workers the opportunity for more time to live their own lives while fulfilling the responsibilities of their natural helper role.

Several of the most progressive countries in the world have been following this approach for several years. Québec must now follow suit.

#### **COMMITMENT 58: INTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS INTO THE LABOUR MARKET**

Québec has welcomed an average of 44 000 immigrants a year in the last decade, including 54 000 in 2010 alone. Of these, 70% were economic immigrants. However, Québec has not yet been able to use immigration to benefit its economic development.

The reality is disappointing. The Government of Québec failed to implement conditions for successful integration into the labour market despite the considerable increase in the flow of immigrants in the past decade. The Auditor General's report published in May 2010 is very clear on the matter: Québec failed to provide adequate tools to harness its real capacity to welcome and integrate newcomers into the labour market. As the Auditor General indicated, without such tools, Québec is incapable of absorbing such high immigration flows and using them to benefit its development.

The extent of the difficulty in integrating immigrants into the labour market in Québec is the result of governmental improvisation. These problems arise not only because of low employment rates but also because of the professional dequalification of numerous newcomers who cannot hold positions that are in line with their skill sets. The situation is a losing one for all sides.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will take two important steps following its election to ensure that immigration can make an optimal contribution to Québec's economic progress. The first step is to limit the number of immigrants to 45 000 for a period of two years. The second is to use the downtime to establish resources and

mechanisms that will maximize the employability of immigrants and ensure their harmonious integration into Québec's Francophone majority.

In this spirit, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will review in particular the planning, selection and welcome process for immigrants. The Coalition government's immigration policy will aim to increase the proportion of immigrants who are fluent in French, willing to settle in the region and trained in fields that correspond to our labour market needs. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will also take the necessary steps to directly foster the integration of immigrants into the labour market by ensuring, among other things, that their professional skills are superior and recognized more quickly.

### **COMMITMENT 59: BETTER REPRESENTATION OF WORKERS' ASSOCIATIONS**

Unionizing Québec workers significantly contributed to their emancipation. Over the years, Québec has largely relied on the manufacturing industry. As unionization initially arose in factories, Québec developed a long tradition of unionization and maintains strong unionization today. It is thanks to this tradition that industrial relations in Québec are relatively civilized and parties are generally respectful of each other.

Under the current provisions of the Québec Labour Code, certification may be granted based on a secret ballot by employees affected by the application or granted automatically upon submission of membership cards signed by 50% of affected employees. Québec is the only one of Canada's four major provinces to allow union certification to be granted without holding a vote by secret ballot.

The lack of secret vote is not without problems. First and foremost, it prevents workers from expressing their preference anonymously without the pressure that can be exerted on them by union organizers and colleagues who are in favour of certification and without the fear of their preference subsequently being criticized. Furthermore, the lack of formal vote means that there is no requirement to hold a general meeting where the workers' various points of view can be expressed and debated. Surveys conducted in 2007 and 2009 indicate that a vast majority of Quebecers would be in favour of a change to the legislation to require that a secret ballot be held for all applications for certification.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will therefore modify the Labour Code to make a secret ballot mandatory for union certification of workers and for certain other votes, such as the vote to strike and the acceptance or refusal of management offers.

## Ensure the vitality of all regions of Québec

The Québec territory is vast with a wealth of beautiful regions. From the metropolitan area to the national capital through all agricultural lands, forests and coastlines, one can but witness its plurality and the complementarity of its regions, our strength for the future.

Unfortunately, it is easily noticeable that the enormous potential of these regions has never been tapped or even received the attention deserved or even been given the means to fully develop. Though they can be popular at election time, regional development policies are often shelved because of the lack of true political will or the lack of vision, and the measures that are deployed are usually fragmented and incoherent. And even when there are incentives such as the creation of special development funds, they are mismanaged, the sad FIER story is but one example.

The Coalition Avenir Québec is resolutely committed to planning the development of all the regions of Québec, taking into account the driving force of rural communities and urban centers. With this in mind, the growth of each region is part and parcel

of the overall economic development strategy. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will reinforce all existing economic measures destined to ensure regional vitality: enhancing the role of the Caisse de depot et placement du Québec in all regional economies, taking strategic equity position in major projects that are involved in the exploitation of our natural resources to maximize economic benefits, and adopting a series of measures to support the agricultural and agri-food enterprises that will also be eligible for the previously mentioned measures. These include start-up and enterprise ownership transfer funds. A wide-ranging entrepreneurship development strategy will also be incorporated in all regional development strategies.

To set forth this undertaking, the Coalition Avenir Québec hopes to rely on the dynamism, the ingenuity and the knowledge of the inhabitants of all the regions. The individuals possess the qualifications and the leadership required to fully develop their territory's potential. This is why planning the growth of each region will be supported by a true decentralization of the powers and resources of the Québec state. The various communities throughout Québec not only can but must participate in the determination and deployment of the conditions conducive to their development. Thus a Coalition Avenir Québec government will increase the financial and administrative autonomy of the regions by transferring governmental responsibilities and resources that are so crucial to revitalizing the territories.

## **COMMITMENT 60: REVITALIZING MONTRÉAL**

Québec's strength lies in its region and the metropolitan area. Favouring the development of Montréal makes sense because it means contributing to sustaining regional development and vice-versa. A Coalition Avenir Québec government would put an end to the sterile opposition between Montréal and the rest of Québec for too long. It is only by pooling all our efforts that Quebecers from all regions will prosper.

Montréal is in no way in competition with other regions but competes with other metropolitan areas. Montréal faces an enormous challenge as it must be a pole of attraction capable of keeping up with its immediate rivals Toronto, New York and Boston. But it also has to compete more and more with major cities around the world. Montréal's competitive edge is the quality of life it offers and its strategic location for enterprises.

A large city's most important trump card is the quality of its work force. Pools of expertise attract enterprises and not the other way around. There are four top notch universities in Montréal. The establishment of clusters of enterprises in the electronic entertainment, aeronautics, finance and life sciences have resulted in the development of critical masses of highly qualified workers. Montréal's cultural dynamism has greatly contributed to conferring on Québec's metropolis a brand image on the international stage and to attracting a significant amount of tourism.

Montréal's development is, in many ways, very successful. But the city's present problems are a source of concern and can only compromise its capacity to become Québec's true economic locomotive. The recent exodus of young families impacts heavily on its vitality. The unemployment rate is too high and pinpoints the difficulty of integrating immigrants into the workforce. Industrial activity, already at a standstill, is slowing down once more. The biopharmaceutical industry, for a long time one of the jewels in its crown, continues to falter. The traffic congestion problems are becoming an even bigger problem as the city's infrastructure requires major investments and have led to the relocation of some economic activities off the island. Finally, Montréal's chronically underfunded universities are finding it harder and harder to remain competitive on the world scene.

The Coalition Avenir Québec's strategy to ensure the development of Montréal is based on three main axes. The first one consists in reinforcing Montréal's position as a city of knowledge and culture. Added funding for universities, including some of the leading research facilities in Québec, will target this axis. The Coalition will also offer long-term

support to major cultural events that attract tourists and promises to launch a major offensive aimed at helping Montréal become North America's art of living capital.

The second axis of the Coalition's economic strategy for Montreal will target the city's economic base and this approach includes two precise elements. It aims to consolidate existing activities in key sectors. A Coalition Avenir Québec government would quickly set up a working group to study the faltering biopharmaceutical sector to try and find solutions that could lead to enhanced activity in the Montréal area. Secondly, the expansion project would recruit foreign enterprises to come and set up in Montréal through a marketing strategy led by Investissement Québec and others.

Finally, the Coalition Avenir Québec will offer financial relief to Montréal through policies targeting the maintenance strategy for various infrastructure, while also concluding a fiscal agreement that would afford Montréal the appropriate resources to realize its full potential as Québec's metropolis.

#### **COMMITMENT 61: DYNAMIC NATIONAL CAPITAL**

The Coalition believes that the development of Québec must take advantage of the economic vitality of the national capital. The national capital is an essential pole for the development of Québec as it is home to international class academic institutions and offers an expertly qualified workforce in many fields. It is Québec's political and administrative centre as well as a service centre for a large number of citizens from central and eastern Québec. It offers an exceptional geo-tourism potential.

The invaluable assets of the national capital are numerous and the vitality of its development is undeniable. Yet the Coalition believes that it could do even better, notably by diversifying its economic and increasing its tourism potential. Once elected, a Coalition Avenir Québec government would organize a meeting of the main economic leaders of the national capital and its regions to conceive a plan to consolidate, expand and diversify the foundations of its economic development. The basis for this consultation process and the notion around which a Coalition Avenir Québec government would mobilize these national capital economic leaders is the development of a business plan focused on attracting a much larger number of knowledge-based economy companies. In light of the wide range of locational factors it offers, the national capital region could be even more successful in this area.

The national capital will have the concentrated attention and support of a Coalition Avenir Québec government. Its development depends on this collaboration and so does the economic well-being of all of Québec.

## COMMITMENT 62: A TRUE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The plurality of the different regions represents an important key to Québec's development. Each of them offers a combination of conditions favouring the emergence of new economic activities. The Coalition believes it is important to offer the resources and support required so that each region can strive and be successful. Each region must enjoy adequate autonomy in order to develop the potential of its territory to its fullest while also stimulating forward-looking initiatives for all Quebecers inhabiting and animating them.

A diversification of the economic activity is at the heart of the development strategy for all regions. Diversification is key to stability and the future of the territory's communities as it directly influences their resiliency. The Coalition Avenir Québec is of the opinion that one way to reach this target is ensuring the deployment of local development centres (CLD's) in each region and that these entities be invested with the necessary tools and spirit of entrepreneurship, along with the obligation to perform so as to meet the needs of business leaders. The plan also calls for simplified and accelerated access to the capital required to fund enterprises in each regions. To this effect, CLD's will develop a direct link to *Investissement Québec*.

Shortly after being elected, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will put in place an economic growth plan for all regions that will take into account their specificities and build on their strengths. This plan will be based on a targeted prospecting strategy to attract new enterprises in each region and the combined efforts of CLDs, the education sector, including professional training centers, colleges and universities and, most importantly, *Investissement Québec*.

In each of the regions, economic development endeavours will be led by CLDs and *Investissement Québec* that will in turn make way for input from entrepreneurs and promote the spirit of entrepreneurship. These government bodies will see their mandates reinforced and become one-stop counters in matters of entrepreneurial support and employment development. This new direct link to *Investissement Québec* will enable CLDs to offer entrepreneurs simplified and accelerated access to financing.

This plan will also encompass the First Nations of Québec's expressed will to participate in the economic development of the regions where they live.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will review all the fiscal incentives aimed at promoting the start-up and the development of regional enterprises.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will increase the financial and administrative autonomy of all regions by transferring governmental responsibilities and resources to revitalize each territory.

### **COMMITMENT 63: STRONG AGRICULTURE**

Québec's economic development must make room for a strong agriculture as the sector includes some 29,000 agricultural enterprises and is a driving force of many regions where it is vital to the wellbeing of towns and villages. The food processing or agri-food sector accounts for 174,000 jobs, most of them in the metropolitan Montréal area. Though net agriculture revenues have been growing, the sector is going through difficult times : too many producers suffer from psychological distress, there is a new generation of farmers who feel they need to be better supported, there is more and more encroachment on good agricultural land, the challenges of world markets are complex and environmental issues are continuously changing.

The last decade was filled with consultations, reports, a green book, but overall, nothing really changed. It was a status quo decade and consequently, the Québec agricultural sector is lagging behind. It is time to put the agricultural sector back on track on the road to prosperity and a confident new generation of farmers.

The Coalition believes in the future of agriculture and the bio-food industry. Its development plan features numerous structural measures for the agricultural and bio-food sectors. Yet, the industry is confronted with difficult challenges due to climate condition volatility, the fragile balance between offer and demand, speculation on green land, etc. For many reasons, food products cannot be assimilated to other industrial products.

To rapidly set in motion the ambitious policies and clear and concerted strategies, a Coalition Avenir Québec government is committed to making the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food a permanent member of the Priorities Committee.

### **COMMITMENT 64: PROMOTE QUÉBEC FOOD PRODUCTS**

Québec farms and food processors produce quality products. A lot of effort goes into the marketing of Québec food products but we could do better. Purchasing local products offers many advantages for consumers who benefit from quality fresh produce, as does the overall Québec economy.

Québec consumers are becoming more selective with regard to the quality of the products they purchase, more so when it comes to food. These products must be clearly identified and this is an inescapable requirement in the 21st century.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will invest extra funds to promote Québec-grown food products in order to significantly stimulate purchasing locally.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will make labelling mandatory for all products containing GMOs.

### **COMMITMENT 65: FOOD PROCESSING IN QUÉBEC**

The food processing industry is an essential link in Québec's economic growth and development. It employs 65,000 people and is present in all regions of Québec. More than ever, the sector relies on innovation to make its mark not only locally but internationally as well. Food distribution is controlled by giant multinational companies which makes it difficult for our SME's to get their products onto supermarket shelves and win the hearts of consumers. The challenges are enormous but the potential of this industry is important for all of Québec.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government would enforce many of the Pronovost Report recommendations in matters of food processing. This includes launching a strategy to accelerate investments in enterprises in the sector and make *Transformation Alimentaire Québec* (TRANSAQ) an important partner in this endeavour.

### **COMMITMENT 66: FAIR AND JUST REGULATIONS FOR QUÉBEC FARMERS**

The agri-food industry is highly regulated throughout the world, especially in Québec and Canada where traceability, labelling and sanitary standards are stringent.

The food product market is global and we can be proud of the quality of products we export all over the world. This is the result of important investments by Québec farmers and processors that apply the strictest quality standards. Yet we must import a large number of foreign products that are often sold at lower prices than our local products, notably because they are not subject to the same regulations and standards where they originated. This means that the investments required to produce them are lower than here.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will work to find a balance in this matter by implementing measures that would level the playing field for Québec farmers. Some of the measures would make sure that imported products meet the same standards that are imposed on Québec-based enterprises. To do so, the Coalition would open talks with the federal authorities in this matter.

## For a truly sustainable development

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will wholeheartedly respect the environment and act according to clear principles to reach precise goals. In regards to greenhouse gas emissions, one of the fundamental aspects of any sustainable development policy, a Coalition Avenir Québec government is committed to abide by the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) targets and reduce Québec's production of greenhouse gases to at least 25% less than the 1990 level.

Such an objective should in no way be seen as being in contradiction with goals included in an ambitious economic development. The Coalition doesn't consider economic development and environmental protection as being in opposition to one another and the same applies to sustainable development. In our economy, long-term economic growth and the society's well-being are inextricably linked to the protection of our environment, responsible management of energy consumption, the exploitation of our natural resources and adherence to sustainable development principles.

This is the reason behind the Coalition Avenir Québec's intention to closely link all economic questions with sustainable development and to guarantee that Québec benefits from the exploitation of our natural resources while having the utmost respect for the environment.

Furthermore, Québec has everything to gain by working to develop its expertise in future-oriented fields such as environmental sciences, green technologies, energy efficiency, alternative energy sources and the development of less-polluting environmentally-friendly modes of transportation. The advancements Québec can achieve will not only enhance the quality of life for all Quebecers, they can also become the basis for conquering new markets in areas having brilliant prospects for the future.

There have been many political declarations supporting sustainable development, yet in reality, oil imports are continuously increasing in Québec, now reaching 12 billion barrels annually. To control this consumption and improve our economic record, our plan includes the development of public transit and green vehicles while also focusing on alternative energy sources and important energy savings.

To favour energy savings and the production of green energy, the Coalition will set up green credit programs enabling enterprises and individuals alike to finance their energy efficiency measures from the savings they generate. We will also instruct Hydro-Québec to buyback green energy that will be included in the distribution grid.

## **TIME TO ACT**

The present government's master plan for all environmental and energy issues is one of political opportunism. This attitude has, at times, resulted in incomprehensible and damaging improvisation. In the face of a strong public opinion, the Liberal government quickly discovered it had an environmental vocation that was just as rapidly forgotten. This was never any clearer than in the shale gas dossier.

The Coalition believes that Québec is at a crossroads and the time for action is now for many questions pertaining to the environment and energy development. In certain cases, such as shale gas exploitation of asbestos mining, a Coalition Avenir Québec government would act swiftly. In other cases, such as the development of nuclear energy and the future of the Gentilly-2 power plant, it will consider the results of the studies presently underway and then take a final decision.

### **COMMITMENT 67: RETHINK THE PLAN NORD**

Québec's energy potential and its natural resources are exceptional elements that will guide our economic development for years to come. There are two distinct conceptions of the energy and natural resource potential that are often in confrontation with one another. The first is based on a discount sale of our natural resources that will most certainly greatly reduce the benefits for Quebecers and lead to a waste of our energy potential. On the other hand, the Coalition Avenir Québec's plan has been designed to ensure maximum economic benefits for Québec while imposing strong environmental protection standards and sustainable development principles.

Discounting Québec's natural resources to foreign enterprises cannot in any way be considered to be in our best economic interest while it also compromises the future of upcoming generations.

No one can doubt the fabulous wealth of possibilities offered by energy development and the exploitation of our natural resources. Yet one must never forget that natural resources do not offer unlimited potential as they are often non-renewable. This is why tapping this potential must be the result of sound government decisions and guidelines. The development potential associated with all these activities greatly depend on the policies set forth and the visions behind the policies.

The Coalition's choices are clear. The Plan Nord must be deployed, first and foremost, in the interests of Quebecers. The realization of such a plan is subject to precise imperatives ensuring that the exploitation of our natural resources must fully benefit

Quebecers. The operations must also be planned for the long-term so as to sustain Québec's quality of life and that of future generations.

Quebecers must own their natural resources and control their economic development. Retaining the ownership of our resources guarantees that decisions regarding their exploitation will be taken by Quebecers for Quebecers. There is no better way to make sure that the Québec's interests are protected within a long-term perspective.

These are some of the reasons why the Coalition Avenir Québec will instruct the Caisse de depot et placement du Québec to invest in the Québec economy. The Coalition will also create a natural resource development fund of 5 billion dollars with a mandate to obtain strategic equity in enterprises exploiting natural resources in Québec.

Québec ownership of its natural resources is the promise of a fair and just sharing of the costs and profits of their exploitation over the coming years. This is where the Coalition Avenir Québec marks a clear difference from the vision, or lack thereof, of the Liberal government.

The Liberal approach, a backward-looking conception of economic development, consists in nationalizing the costs related to the exploitation of our resources, making Quebecers pay for all the required infrastructure, and then privatizing profits for enterprises, foreign ones in most cases. This obsolete economic development vision, as epitomized in the Plan Nord, is not one favoured by the Coalition Avenir Québec, which wants Québec to retain more control over its development.

### **COMMITMENT 68: HYDROELECTRIC DEVELOPMENT**

For many years, hydroelectricity has been the flagship of Québec energy development and it will remain so for years to come. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will consider the development of hydroelectricity as a national priority.

The economic and environmental benefits of this choice are clear. Clean, renewable exclusively Québec-owned energy characterized by its extraordinary potential for development. Hydroelectricity is a very precious heritage for generations of Quebecers. Like any heritage, its wealth may generate profits or, on the contrary, be exploited with a short-term outlook and no global vision.

The Coalition believes that recent hydroelectric developments have not generated the benefits Quebecers were expecting. Hydro-Québec has not streamlined its operations in order to reduce operating costs. The Coalition considers that rationalizing management practices at Hydro-Québec could result in important savings.

In short, support by a Coalition Avenir Québec government for hydroelectric project development will be subject to compulsory results. The Coalition believes that Hydro-Québec can do better and must be more strictly managed and the energy savings policies it implements should bring superior performances.

### **COMMITMENT 69: ENERGY SAVINGS**

The energy choices Québec has made are the main reasons why we can boast that our greenhouse gas emissions are already among the lowest in North America. The Coalition Avenir Québec wants to capitalize on this comparative advantage and subscribe to the major greenhouse gas reduction goals set forth by the international community.

In fact, the Coalition adheres to the principle that energy efficiency is one of the keys to any greenhouse gas emission reduction strategy and that it is also a pillar of a truly sustainable development policy. Energy efficiency can and must be a technological and economic development lever as well as a source of job creation.

The Coalition Avenir Québec insists that the first step towards the adoption of an energy efficiency policy will be a sweeping review of all existing measures. At this time, the fragmentary nature of most energy efficiency programs and the wide ranging organizations and agencies that run them – Ministry of Natural Resources and Fauna, distributors like Hydro-Québec and Gaz Métro – unduly complicate obtaining funding or technical support, no more so than for industrial, commercial and institutional organizations. There are programs dealing with improved electricity consumption, others for natural gas consumption, and then there are those for process improvement. All these programs are managed in silos and there is no one-stop counter where a citizen or an entrepreneur can go to find out which program is better suited to his needs. Furthermore, the fact that some programs are managed by energy producers and distributors is a cause for concern. There must be a review of existing measures and a new more coherent and effective strategy will be implemented.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will put an end to the dispersal of programs and responsibilities while maximizing the benefits of energy efficiency programs and placing them under a one-stop agency.

Responsible energy use and the adoption of attitudes that adhere to sustainable development principles can result from informing citizens and enterprises of their true energy consumption and how this impacts the environment. A Coalition Avenir Québec

government intends to closely study this possibility by setting up indicators that would supply the data required to help consumers make informed decisions and adopt the proper attitude.

The continuous increase of per capita energy consumption over the past few years is a clear sign that special attention must be given to energy consumption in residential sectors. The building code must be reviewed in order to better address this matter and promote the use of products and techniques offering superior energy performance in the construction of buildings (orientation, insulation, windows, etc.).

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will implement an ambitious energy efficiency and saving plan:

- Putting an end to the fragmenting of energy efficiency programs between the Ministry of the Environment and Fauna and distributors to mandate a single entity to manage the programs.
- Evaluate the possibility of progressively introducing a mandatory carbon footprint for medium-size and large enterprises as well as real-time units monitoring energy consumption in homes.
- Progressively review and strengthen the building code in regards to energy efficiency for new construction.

#### **COMMITMENT 70: MORE ENERGY-FRIENDLY VEHICLES**

By itself, road transportation generates over 40% of all greenhouse emissions in Québec. It is important to promote the purchase of energy-friendly vehicles and certain measures have been introduced offering rebates at the time of purchase. But like other measures, they are too restrictive and fragmentary and have not generated fundamental attitude changes.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will design a far reaching program offering clear and efficient inducements promoting the purchase of new or used more energy-friendly vehicles, whether they are electric, hybrid or low-consumption gas motors. The goal is that this program will fund itself by modulating the cost with regard to consumption data without increasing the tax burden of Quebecers and without requiring the creation of a new grant program.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will introduce effective incentives to favor the purchase of hybrid vehicles or those consuming little energy.

## **COMMITMENT 71: IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSIT**

Improving public transit is one of the best ways to reduce the use of hydrocarbon and greenhouse gas emissions. It also offers a much need reprieve and diminishes the need for the building of new infrastructure.

The challenge is not a simple one and the investments required to modernize present equipment and develop new ones are substantial. On the other hand, promoting public transit will generate important economic activity as it will allow enterprise to increase their productivity level by reducing the time wasted in traffic. Promoting public transit will generate savings for families and allow them to invest in the Québec economy what they would spend on gas today. The greater Montréal area and the national capital region would be the first to benefit from an improved and more efficient public transit system.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will meet the challenges and enable Québec's main urban centers, including the metropolitan area, to become models of public transit development. The Coalition would adopt proven and inexpensive methods to improve the speed and fluidity of transportation to and from urban centres, such as reserved traffic lanes, associated with a better control (notably with geolocation) and adequate signage. The Coalition will also set up environmental credit programs aimed at supporting public transit corporations in their endeavours to use electric, hybrid and low consumption gas motor vehicles. The program would also develop a Québec-based sector of excellence focusing on manufacturing this type of vehicle.

Understanding that the popularity of public transit depends mostly on how easy it is for citizens to have access to services, the Coalition will adopt measures to encourage municipalities to give preference to public transit in their development plans and urban planning regulations favouring the construction of high-density residential projects around identified urban transit poles (train stations, buses). This type of development can be only beneficial for municipalities since the projects will generate new revenues from the new homes and the economic activity around these poles.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will adopt a series of measures to improve public transit throughout Québec. These measures will cover the development of sectors of excellence in new modes of transportation and the funding of infrastructure:

- Suburban trains and new bus corridors;
- Reserved traffic lanes linked to special signage systems ensuring the fluidity and speed of buses in urban centers;

- Environmental credit programs enabling public transit corporations using low pollution vehicles to benefit from savings;
- Measures leading municipalities to adopt urban planning favouring public transit and the construction of high-density residential projects around urban transit poles respecting natural zones.
- Larger park and ride lots with more parking spaces near suburban train stations and subway stations.

### **COMMITMENT 72: REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA**

Montreal is a special case transportation-wise as highways become parking lots each and every morning. This situation requires special attention.

The Coalition believes that the solution calls for intelligent and well-planned development of transportation networks. Because of the present financial situation of the Government of Québec, with limited resources, difficult choices must be made. With this outlook, transportation modes offering the best performance will be given preference.

The Coalition Avenir Québec intends to prioritize proven, efficient transportation to serve the metropolitan area by carrying as many passengers as possible. This will translate into:

- The development of a suburban train network
- Reserved traffic lanes and special measures for the bus network
- Quick bus links on high-traffic surface routes
- Targeted and gradual prolonging of the metro network within a long-term outlook.

### **COMMITMENT 73: FORMAL MORATORIUM ON SHALE GAS DEVELOPMENT**

The Coalition Avenir Québec firmly believes that the exploitation of our natural resources constitutes a pillar of our economic development. Nevertheless, this exploitation is not to be carried out at any cost. On the one hand, it is imperative that the exploitation of our resources should benefit Quebecers first and foremost. On the other hand, and this is fundamental, it should only be done safely within environmentally and socially acceptable guidelines.

In view of this, the Coalition Avenir Québec will always act with a great deal of caution. Improvisation and a short-term view in this area can have disastrous consequences.

Before authorizing the extraction of a resource, the impact on the environment and neighbouring populations must be minimized and judged acceptable.

The way the shale gas situation was managed is a good example. Decisions were improvised, there weren't enough consultations, and the deficient handling of the matter did not take into account the concerns of the population, which had clearly raised important questions. There is a de facto moratorium on shale gas exploitation and the fragmenting process required. The Coalition Avenir Québec will confirm this moratorium. The latter would only be lifted when reliable and credible scientific studies demonstrate that these activities can be done in an environmentally friendly fashion respecting the rights of local populations.

A Coalition Avenir Québec shall decree, immediately after its election, a formal moratorium on all fracturing linked to shale gas exploration or exploitation, to be in effect until scientific studies clearly show that this fracturing and the resulting shale gas exploitation can be done respecting the natural environment and the health of local populations, and that an evaluation of the available resources be completed.

The Coalition will also ensure that the industry be held accountable for the drilling that has already been done in order to prevent the existence of abandoned sites.

#### **COMMITMENT 74: ONE-STOP ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEM**

Energy development and the implementation of coherent environmental regulations are at the core of an integrated sustainable development policy. In both these sectors, the overlapping and duplication of actions taken by both the federal government and Québec are a source of inefficiency. The result is cost increases, numerous delays and a flagrant lack of coherence in regulations and policies. The Coalition will lead discussions with the federal government to bring to an end this waste of resources and allow Québec to develop a sustainable development strategy corresponding to its needs and values.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government proposes to be the sole overseer in the regulation and consultation process, which includes the environmental impact studies of all economic development projects. The deployment of a one-stop system will facilitate the deployment of the evaluation process and enhance its transparency. By eliminating duplication, this will contribute to reducing the costs of the studies and at the same time facilitate the participation of enterprises, environmental groups and citizens in the process.

### **COMMITMENT 75: CAUTIOUS EXPLOITATION OF GULF RESOURCES**

In all matters regarding the development of our natural resources and energy, caution will always guide a Coalition Avenir Québec government. Improvisation and short-term views can lead to disastrous consequences.

This principle will guide all decisions concerning the exploitation of the oil and natural gas potential of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. For the Coalition, the onus will be placed on those looking to exploit these resources. Québec's resource potential cannot be overlooked from an economic standpoint but independent impact studies, an extensive debate and wide consultations will have to be completed in order to document the safe and secure exploitation of this energy reserve.

### **COMMITMENT 76: REVIEW THE NATIONAL WATER POLICY**

Water is a precious resource that is abundant in Québec. This abundance in no way diminishes the government's responsibility towards the preservation and management of this resource. The Coalition Avenir Québec will review the various modalities of the present national water policy to ensure a rational and sustainable management of this resource. The Coalition is of the opinion that a more substantial royalty policy for water exploitation should be adopted.

This review will be carried out to ensure that the industrial and commercial exploitation of this precious collective wealth of Quebecers, including its use in the industrial processes, is not permitted without fair royalties.

### **COMMITMENT 77: GREEN CREDIT PROGRAM**

The costs involved in the adoption of energy efficiency measures often retard their implementation. Although these measures will generate short or long-term savings, this isn't always sufficient to convince the user to deploy them and, for many consumers, it is simply impossible to absorb the initial investment required. Numerous actions that have a substantial impact on energy consumption in Québec are never applied and individual or corporate expenditures are never realized, whereas more costly and polluting technologies are maintained in operation.

The Coalition is resolute in its intention to put an end to this vicious cycle. It will establish partnerships with financial institutions to encourage them to make it easier to finance energy efficiency measures. These financing programs could facilitate the modernization of industrial, commercial and institutional equipment, the installation of geothermal systems or other innovative residential technologies. The programs could allow financial institutions to recuperate the funds invested through the energy savings generated.

## **COMMITTEE 78: ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES**

From our forests and fallow lands to the energy stocked underground and the residual matter we produce, renewable energy sources are abundant and low polluting. A Coalition Avenir Québec Government will put in place a series of measures favouring recourse to alternative energy sources. Together they will help in improving our energy and environmental record while generating substantial savings. Thus it will adopt measures aimed at:

- Promote projects that recycle residual matter from various sources including municipalities, industries, institutions and retail stores to produce biogases;
- Favour projects to produce ethanol as an additive to gas from municipal organic waste and agricultural residues;
- Reduce the use of heavy oil required in institutional and residential heating systems and replace it with forestry biomass by calling on low polluting technologies that meet the Washington standard of under 4.5 grams/hour of particulates;
- Encourage the use of geothermal systems in the construction of new homes or the conversion of heavy oil systems.

## **COMMITMENT 79: GREEN ENERGY BUYBACK PROGRAM**

In accordance with the recommendations of the Comité consultatif sur les énergies renouvelables, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will set up a guaranteed feed-in tariff for renewable energies. This program aims to offer the best price on the basis of long-term contracts, to enterprises investing in research, development and marketing of green energies, including the ones produced from residual matter.

This tariff guarantees producers they will be paid a price equivalent to the marginal costs of hydroelectric plants presently under construction, including transport costs. The program, managed by Hydro-Québec will serve to buyback electricity produced by wind turbine projects developed by local communities, MRCs and First Nations and even energy from municipal or forestry waste.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government, in accordance with the recommendations of the *comité consultatif sur les énergies renouvelables*, will instruct Hydro-Québec to set up a green energy buyback program. The latter will guarantee producers be paid a tariff equivalent to the marginal cost of hydroelectric dams presently under construction, including transportation fees.

## **COMMITMENT 80: BAN ON ASBESTOS EXPORTS**

The obligation to protect all Quebecers must be accompanied by an attitude of acting responsibly towards other citizens on the planet. With the present scientific data in mind, exporting asbestos to other countries, or even ensuring its exploitation here, are activities that are morally and scientifically indefensible.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will ban the export of this resource and work with economic leaders of the asbestos region to conceive an industrial reconversion policy.

## **COMMITMENT 81: REVIEW THE STATE OF WIND ENERGY**

The time has come for a real debate on the topic of wind turbine energy, the conditions surrounding its development, the costs involved, and the environmental and economic benefits for Quebecers.

The Coalition believes that the development of wind turbine energy has not fulfilled its promise in Québec and that the present government's lack of vision is directly responsible for this situation. The Coalition is ready to act as a true leader in this area.

# **A STRONG, PROUD AND CONFIDENT QUÉBEC**

Quebecers constitute a nation shaped by a singular historical journey to be pursued with audacity and solidarity. It is the expression of a collective will to live, resolutely projected in the future. Quebecers possess their own identity and a common language of which they are very proud.

The Québec government presides over the only primarily francophone community in America. It must fully assume its special inherent responsibilities, most notably in regard to the defence of Québec and the promotion of the French language and Québec culture. Consequently, it should never be considered identical to the governments of other Canadian provinces.

The Coalition's position on the future of Québec encompasses one central idea. Only a strong Québec, conscious of its identity and particular needs, could improve its position within the federation and regain control of its destiny. Unfortunately, the debate over the political status of Québec is at an impasse and weakens the Québec nation. Firstly, by preventing Quebecers from uniting around common objectives, then by mobilizing energy that could surely be better employed in solving current problems. The Coalition believes that the priority right now is to revitalize Québec.

This stale debate has drained a lot of energy over the past 40 years and, without denying its historical importance, we have to recognize that it is at a standstill today. There is no reason to question the legitimacy of one option or the other, but simply to assess the situation based on the reality and draw the relevant consequences.

## **A resolutely nationalist position**

Quebecers are weary of the constitutional debate and wish that their government would refocus on other challenges for the next few years. They are not attracted to the sovereigntist project promoted by the Parti Québécois or to the Canada-at-all-costs stance of the Liberal party.

This in no way is a sign that they have given up and are resigned to see their government fold in the face of Ottawa. Their will to assert themselves is always strong. But they believe that, for now, they must follow another road. And this avenue includes the dynamic defence of Québec's interests in Ottawa and a strong commitment to protecting the French language and promoting Québec culture.

The Coalition's position is resolutely nationalist and corresponds to the outlook of a vast majority of Quebecers. Neither does it constitute a sign of weakness or even a leap forward. On the contrary, it abides by the principle of affirmation and loyalty to Québec.

By placing the principle of a strong Québec at the heart of its political project, the Coalition follows a long tradition that, in the course of history, made the defence of the vital interests of Québec an absolute priority. This is no simple benchmark; it is an essential pillar of the Coalition Avenir Québec government. It has a single goal: build a strong, proud and confident Québec nation.

### **COMMITMENT 82: PUT AN END TO BRIDGING SCHOOLS**

Québec must be the sole master in linguistic matters because of its unique reality in North America. It is legitimate that the government used the notwithstanding clause to defend the French language. It would be a grave error to use without distinction, but never calling on this clause represents a sign of weakness. The Coalition believes that the Québec government, like the Liberal Party under Robert Bourassa in 1988, must never exclude this possibility when fundamental objectives are compromised by the interpretations of the 1982 Constitution, which was never signed by Québec.

One of the most evident of such cases is bridging schools. These schools offer parents (who have no legal right to send their children to subsidized English schools) the option to enrol them in a non-subsidized establishment, thereby acquiring the constitutional

right to English education. After following a certain path in a non-subsidized establishment, the child can claim the constitutional right to English education. That will also be granted to his or her brothers and sisters and their descendants.

To eliminate this inequity, an unacceptable breach in the application of the French Language Charter (*Charte de la langue française*), a Coalition Avenir Québec government will formulate a formal constitutional amendment request aimed at authorizing the government not to take into consideration the education received in non-subsidized English schools to evaluate if he or she is eligible to subsidized English education.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will forbid the practice of bridging schools and formally request that Article 23(2) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms be amended so as to disallow the right to a subsidized English education based on previously having frequented a non-subsidized English school. This amendment would allow a return to the situation established by Law 104, adopted unanimously by the National Assembly in June, 2002.

### **COMMITMENT 83: DYNAMICALLY PROMOTE AND FIRMLY DEFEND QUÉBEC INTERESTS**

In its dealings with the government of Canada, a Coalition Avenir Québec government would have but one goal, defending Québec's best interests and not promoting one constitutional option or another. The Coalition's objective is not to establish a climate of confrontation with the government in Ottawa to demonstrate that Canadian federalism does not work in favour of Québec. Neither is it to be complacent and weak in the face of the federal government, for fear of inflaming sovereigntist fervour.

The actions of a Coalition Avenir Québec government in its relations with the federal government will be guided by no hidden agenda or ulterior motive. The Coalition will only ask to be judged by its coherence and the results of its actions or its proven capacity to preserve and consolidate Québec's achievements and register gains in certain fields.

The Coalition does not recognize the legitimacy of the 1982 unilateral repatriation of the Constitution. It believes that the full recognition of the specificities of Québec within the Canadian federation remains unfinished business. Isn't it better to put this debate on hold for a few years so as to be able to bury it definitely afterwards. Solely because of its unique nature, this fundamental issue is above any partisanship and deals with deep roots of the Québec society. The Coalition has no pretensions, nor intention to solve this complex problem in the short-term. This being said, it is convinced that it can get Québec back on track and prepare it to deal with the question of its political future, sooner or later, under improved conditions. A strong and united Québec,

regenerated by efficiency and results, is a much better choice than a divided Québec as is the case presently.

#### **COMMITMENT 84: PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

An empty chair policy will always be a losing strategy and absentees are always in the wrong. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will play an active role in matters of Canadian intergovernmental relations. Refusing to actively get involved in the discussions with the federal government will never lead to correcting the historical inequities towards Québec; on the contrary it will only contribute to accentuate the negative effects.

With this in mind, the actions of a Coalition Avenir Québec government will always be based on vigorously defending and fully exercising its right to opt-out, with full financial compensation, from any federal program that deals with some of its own prerogatives. Québec fought long and hard for this right and a Coalition Avenir Québec government intends to use it any time the interests of Québec demand it.

The Coalition will also take the necessary actions to ensure respect for the fiscal equity principle. 10 years ago or so, Canada's provincial governments denounced the existence of a deeply-rooted fiscal imbalance within the Canadian federation. The problem was accepted and well documented: work was done by the Commission sur le déséquilibre fiscal set up by the Québec government in 2001. The Commission demonstrated just how taxation revenues of all governments in Canada, federal and provincial, do not correspond to the responsibilities each of them must deal with. The federal government has access to revenues that are much too important, given its jurisdiction, while the provincial governments, which have the heavy burdens of areas like health and education, are systematically underfinanced. Faced with a unanimous protest from government representatives and civil society, the federal government effected certain modifications in recent years by raising transfers to provinces. The federal government's recent announcement that it was modifying the rules surrounding the funding of health care and the statistical data regarding revenues and expenditures of the various governments in Canada clearly shows that the fiscal equity battle is far from over.

The agreement on health care signed in 2004 will expire in 2014, and Stephen Harper's government has already stated that transfer payments will continue to increase by 6% annually until 2017, but will afterwards be brought back to the nominal GDP growth rate. This measure has been unanimously criticized and will lead to insufficient transfers to cover the forecasted medium-term growth of the cost of health care in

Québec. The Coalition will vigorously oppose any unilateral measure that compromises Québec's financial well-being.

The latest chapter in federal-provincial relations reminds us of the context of the 1990s and clearly showcases Québec's vulnerability and pinpoints the government's difficult task of ensuring stable and adequate funding of services to the population. The return in force of the fiscal imbalance in Canada signifies that Quebecers can be penalized twofold. They are overtaxed at the federal level and the services they have a right to expect are underfinanced at the provincial level. Furthermore, they are subject, just as much as their provincial government, to any change of heart in the budget orientations of the federal government.

The Coalition strongly believes that a permanent solution to this recurring problem is an enhanced liberalization of the taxation field occupied by the federal government. The return to a balanced budget in 2015-2016, combined with reduced federal health care transfers, should convince the federal government to transfer to the provinces the federal revenue surpluses. In such an eventuality, a Coalition Avenir Québec government is committed to evenly spread the funds to ensure adequate health care funding and lessen the financial burden of taxpayers.

### **COMMITMENT 85: INCREASED AUTONOMY**

To preserve its gains, Québec must show strong leadership and have a clear and respectful vision of the fields of competence and what type of relation it wants with the federal government. Not limited in its actions by any considerations of a referendum strategy, only a Coalition government can demonstrate the leadership and the vision Québec truly requires.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will work to increase Québec's autonomy within Canada. The objective is not to start a war of flags but to make sure that a certain number of strategic policies better meet the needs and values of Quebecers.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will present a series of demands in order to expand the responsibilities of the Québec government not only the language sector, but also in other fields like immigration, culture, telecommunications, the environment and energy.

#### **• IMMIGRATION**

Discussions will be undertaken with the federal government to renegotiate the modalities of the Canada-Québec Agreement dealing with family reunification. A considerable proportion

of immigrants (20% in 2010) were admitted into Québec through this process. Managing this contingent would raise the percentage of immigrants selected by the Québec government to around 95% and ensure enhanced coherence of Québec's objective in immigration matters.

- **CULTURE**

Discussions will be undertaken with the federal government that should lead to Québec playing a more important role in the promotion of cultural products, notably on foreign markets. The objective of a Coalition Avenir Québec government is to extend to the field of culture the asymmetric federalism principle which supposes that Québec can opt out of federal programs supporting culture and be fully compensated in return.

- **ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Energy development and the implementation of coherent environmental regulations are the core ingredients of an integrated sustainable development policy. In both these sectors, the overlapping and duplication of actions taken by both the federal government and Québec are a source of inefficiency. The result is cost increases, numerous delays and a flagrant lack of coherence in regulations and policies. The Coalition will lead discussions with the federal government to bring about an end this waste of resources and allow Québec to move forward on a sustainable development strategy corresponding to its needs and values.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government proposes to be the sole overseer in the regulation and consultation process, which includes the environmental impact studies of all economic development projects. The deployment of a one-stop system will facilitate the deployment of the evaluation process and enhance its transparency. By eliminating duplication, this will contribute to reducing the costs of the studies and at the same time facilitate the participation of enterprises, environmental groups and citizens in the process.

## **Actively promoting the French language**

The French language is the bedrock of the culture and identity of Quebecers. Past measures to promote it have been successful but the progress is not necessarily sufficient and the situation remains precarious at times. Vigorous measures must be deployed to consolidate the position of French in Québec, improve the quality of French courses, increase the use of French as the official language in the workplace and favour a better integration of immigrants into Québec's francophone majority.

Any reflection on the future of French in Québec must be based on a certain number of principles and facts. French is the common language of all Quebecers, but it is not the

only language. There are linguistic minorities living on its territory and any efforts at promoting French must be done in the tradition of respect and tolerance to the historic English minority in Québec.

Francization efforts in Québec will be deployed in a difficult context. What hasn't been said about the fragility of the French language in North America, a language spoken by only 2% of the continent's population. The decreasing place French occupies within the Canadian territory only increases its fragility. The proportion of citizens whose main language is French was 22% in 2006, down from 29% in 1951. This downward spiral, uninterrupted for the past six decades, shows no sign of reversing itself.

This decline of French in Canada is accompanied by another preoccupying trend, that of the diminishing demographic weight of Québec within the Canadian landscape. Québec represented nearly 30% (28.9%) of the population of Canada back in 1951 while it was only 23.5% in 2006. In 30 years from now, Québec's weight in Canada will probably be around 20% (21% according to various Statistics Canada scenarios). The drop in Québec's demographic weight resulted in an even more marked loss of political weight within the Canadian Federation. This is another downward trend Québec will have to deal with in the coming years.

An essential to fully comprehend the linguistic problem in Québec and in Canada is the drop in the birthrate. For years, the higher fecundity rate of francophone Canadians allowed this group to slow the drop in their demographic weight in Canada. Since the 1960s, when the birthrate of francophones in Québec and Canada started to drop, nothing counter-balanced the two factors that contributed to the increased proportion of Anglophones in Canada, the linguistic shift of francophones outside Québec to English and, more so, the massive adoption of the English language by Canadian immigrants.

The drop in the birthrate is not a uniquely Québec phenomenon, but it has a special significance here where the recourse to immigration has become an important dimension of Québec's demographic policy. Immigration is now, more than ever, a key to Québec's demographic growth and a means to stop the rapid decrease of its demographic weight within the Canadian landscape.

## **OPENNESS AND MUTUAL COMPREHENSION**

In this regard, the Coalition subscribes to a model of diversity management founded on openness and mutual comprehension. This approach is based on the notion that diversity is the wealth of a nation and suggests the active participation of the host

nation in the integration process of the newcomers. The Coalition is of the opinion that Québec must place fundamental markers at the forefront and these include Québec's historic heritage, its democratic ideals, the secular nature of the State, as well as the equality of men and women and the French language.

The linguistic attitude expressed by immigrants, especially those who will opt for French as their everyday language, constitutes a fundamental dimension, if not the most important one, that will determine the success of any francization effort. This is particularly true in Montréal where nearly 90% of all immigrants choose to live. This is very concerning. The situation remains fragile, even after some advances consequent to the adoption of the *Charte française*, there is insufficient progress. The proportion of linguistic transfers of immigrants towards French, about 51%, remains well under the level required to maintain the demographic weight of francophones in Québec in general and more specifically, in Montréal.

Lucidity has to be on the agenda in the development and deployment of measures to consolidate and reinforce the position of French in Québec. This approach has to be implemented both respectfully and resolutely, while bearing in mind that it will be achieved under difficult conditions, for instance, the decreasing proportion of people who claim French as their mother tongue in Montréal and the diminished demographic weight of French in Québec and within the Canadian federation.

These are but some of the reasons why a Coalition Avenir Québec government will reenergize francization efforts in Québec, which were begun over three decades ago with the adoption of Bill 22 and later by the *Charte de la langue française*. This will be achieved through the adoption of measures aiming to ensure the integration of immigrants into the francophone community and the consolidation of French as the official language in the workplace.

#### **COMMITMENT 86: REINFORCING THE ROLE OF THE *OFFICE QUÉBÉCOIS DE LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE***

The *Office québécois de la langue française* must play a pivotal role in the deployment of francization efforts of the coming years. These actions will be energetic and wide ranging to focus on the use of French as the language of the host community and the official language in the workplace. It is also the language that has to figure predominately in all signage. Special attention will be afforded to small enterprises in the metropolitan area.

The Coalition Avenir Québec will give the *Office québécois de la langue française* a firm mandate to coordinate a vigorous effort of francization in Québec. To this effect, it will receive the government's steady support and be given the proper resources required to complete its mission.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will ensure a respectful application of the dispositions of the *Charte de la langue française*: To achieve this:

- Reinforcing the role and powers of the *Office québécois de la langue française*.
- French as the official language in the workplace will be a priority. To this end, the resources presently used by the *ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles* to reinforce the use of French in the workplace will be increased.

Under a Coalition Avenir Québec government, the *Office québécois de la langue française* will once again become a major player in the francization of Québec.

#### **COMMITMENT 87: BETTER CONTROL ON IMMIGRANT SELECTION**

In Canada, immigration is a shared jurisdiction between the federal government and the provinces. Through various agreements reached with Ottawa, Québec has the exclusive responsibility for determining the number of immigrants it chooses to welcome on an economic basis.

Jurisdiction over economic immigration is a precious tool. Candidates in this category must supply some type of economic activity when they arrive here and, in certain cases, occupy a job requiring training and experience, manage an enterprise and even invest. Immigrants in this category are consequently more likely to meet the employment challenges that exist in Québec and will only worsen in the coming years because of an aging population.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will undertake talks with Ottawa to reach an agreement regarding the attribution of more control over the processing of immigration requests, in order to speed up the process and better match the selection of immigrants with the needs of the job market. It will also make sure that immigrants have an adequate knowledge of Québec society and the province they have chosen for their new home.

In the short-term, the Coalition will renegotiate the Canada-Québec Agreement on immigration so that economic candidates chosen by Québec who have obtained their selection certificate will be rapidly granted their 2-year work visa by the Canadian

government. The length of this visa allows the federal government time to complete all the required verifications before issuing a permanent residency visa, during which time the immigrants move to Québec, find a home and a job. The period also enables Québec to validate the integration capacity of the candidates. Those who have not yet been integrated into the job market after two years could lose their selection certificate and never receive their permanent residency visa.

#### **COMMITMENT 88: INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS TO THE FRANCOPHONE MAJORITY**

There is no room for half-successes when Quebecers consider a harmonious integration of immigrants into the francophone majority. The spectacular rise in the number of immigrants over the last decade, nearly 54,000 in 2010 or 67% more than in 2000, was never combined with the implementation of appropriate mechanisms to ensure their integration. In a recent report, the Auditor General pinpointed a number of problems relating to the administrative procedures in the selection process and how the grid used to ensure a proper matching of an immigrant's qualifications and experience and the job market wasn't very efficient. Similar concerns were expressed in a report tabled at the parliamentary commission by the *Conseil supérieur de la langue française*. The report claimed that the Québec government does not always take steps to integrate immigrants; it proposed a series of measures to improve the integration of immigrants into the francophone majority and the job market.

The question regarding economic immigration was dealt with in the chapter dealing with the economy while the following paragraph focuses on their integration. Some of the proposals set forth by the Council to reach our targets are promising but will only bear fruit if sufficient resources are allotted, which is not the case right now. The Coalition intends to correct the situation.

These are simple facts: tools and resources afforded for the selection, welcoming and integration process of immigrants in Québec are insufficient to ensure the candidate's employability and generate the best possible conditions favouring their integration.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will considerably increase resources allocated to the teaching of French to adult immigrants. This measure will allow for more structured teaching of French and better knowledge of the Québec culture. It calls for a consolidation of the professional status of teachers dedicated to this task and a raise in their salary. Measures could be adopted to ensure better job stability and greater recognition.

Resources will also be allocated to ensure a better integration of immigrants into the job market and a special effort will be made to avoid a concentration of new arrivals

in the Montreal area and to help other regions welcome more immigrants. A Coalition government will increase the resources of the *ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles* dedicated to the integration of newcomers.

To counter the lack of resources and the improvisation that characterized immigrant integration these past few years, the Coalition proposes a 2-year moratorium before more efficiently and rationally redeploying efforts to integrate immigrants.

Over this transition period, the number of immigrants accepted annually will be limited to 45,000, which corresponds to the annual average over the past decade. The number will progressively rise to 50,000 after the implementation of the new measures and resources.

The transition period will allow time to examine various solutions to even further increase the proportion of immigrants having a working knowledge of French upon their arrival. These two objectives go hand in hand since the lack of knowledge of French has a negative impact on the hiring of immigrants for many enterprises.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will take energetic measures to ensure the success of the integration of new immigrants to Québec society and its francophone majority:

- Increase the resources allocated to the integration of new immigrants and the teaching of French to adult immigrants, including in all regions;
- Redefine the roles and responsibilities and the sharing of resources between the public and community sectors in matters relating to the integration of immigrants and ensure that services and resources are available in all regions when required;
- Elimination of all sexist bias present in the selection process of immigrants, favouring an increased number of women in the economic immigrant category;
- Limiting the number of immigrants to 45,000 annually for a two-year period to ensure that all necessary new mechanisms and resources can be deployed adequately to maximize the employability of new immigrants and their integration into the francophone majority, followed by a progressive increase of the number of accepted immigrants;
- Modifying the selection criteria linked to the knowledge of the English language to make sure that absence of such knowledge cannot prevent immigration, except in cases where English is an essential condition of employment for the new immigrant.

## **COMMITMENT 89: THE PLACE OF FRENCH IN THE WORKPLACE**

The workplace language in Québec will be the focus of special attention by a Coalition Avenir Québec government. Accompanying measures are planned to help enterprises start, consolidate or complete their francization process. The forecasted budget will allow for a significant increase in the present resources allocated by the *ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles* for the reinforcement of French as the official language in the workplace and public services.

## **COMMITMENT 90: PUTTING AN END TO RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS**

Québec, like all other western societies, is witness to a transformation of its population and tomorrow's Québec will be one of diversity. This increased diversity, notably religious, does raise the question of seeking out common values that will consolidate the rapport between Quebecers of all origins in the future. Common values are the foundation of Québec society and they constitute clear and essential markers that include respect for democratic values, equality between men and women, as well as the primacy of French.

It is on this basis that Quebecers will build an open, modern and progressive society where full recognition of historic Québec will coexist with the development of common values for uniting all those inhabiting Québec's vast territory. The Coalition believes that the secular nature of Québec's institutions is the common denominator on which to build common ground, whereby all Quebecers will be able to interact.

A Coalition Avenir Québec government will adopt a series of initiatives that will translate the 'lay' or secular principle into the reality and lives of Quebecers. In the months following its election, the Coalition will publish a white paper on secularism and this undertaking will conclude with the adoption of the *Charte québécoise de la laïcité*, setting the guidelines for a secular State while recognizing Québec's rich past and heritage.

The adoption of the Lay (Secularism) Charter will result in concrete action as a Coalition Avenir Québec government will amend the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (*Charte des droits et libertés de la personne*) to make sure that equality between men and women cannot be subrogated to any other recognized right. This amendment will allow for a further explicit demonstration of the secular character of the Québec State. Furthermore, a Coalition Avenir Québec government will insist on complete neutrality by all State representatives in positions of authority (prison guards, police, judges, etc.) in matters regarding religious signs. The government will make sure that all State services are given and received with an uncovered face, strictly for identification, communication and safety purposes.

## Promoting the Québec culture

Culture shapes a people's spirit and neglecting one's culture is a negation of oneself. It is essential to our individual growth and our collective accomplishments. More than simply an aspect of societal life, it constitutes a mediator to the universe as well as the medium for entering the world of our thoughts and ideas.

On the plane of personal identity, modes of artistic expression allow for the preservation of our collective memory and our specificity. Culture is the anchor point to our own history, and even more so with our capacity to surpass ourselves and foresee the future in our desired image of living.

An essential key of Québec's artistic dynamism is our openness to the world. The Québec culture has evolved by leaps and bounds since the *Révolution tranquille*. More and more it finds its place on foreign markets and the world stage and becomes richer because of the more multicultural environment. Cosmopolitanism animates Robert Lepage's plays, our innovative and provocative dance troupes, the diversity of Québec literature of the past 20 years (Ying Chen, Sergio Kokis, Dany Laferrière), the Mile-End indie scene, the success of our film-makers (Denis Côté, Philippe Falardeau or Denis Villeneuve, to name but a few) in international festivals and the emergence of a Québec gastronomy are but some of the manifestations of this evolution. Modern cultural Québec is reinventing itself day after day while at the same time respecting its singular personality.

Culture is more than an object of collective pride and an unlimited reservoir of creativity. It is also an important source of economic development and the Coalition believes that we can do more to benefit from the cultural dynamism of Quebecers.

The cultural sector generates annual revenues of \$5 billion (5% of our GDP) and supplies jobs for nearly 170,000 workers directly and indirectly. Contrary to other Canadian provinces, Québec is a net exporter of cultural products and there are two main reasons for this. It consumes very few products from outside compared to its consumption of local products and is able to export much of its production internationally.

The positive benefits of this policy are simple. A large-scale promotion of Québec artistic products constitutes a way to enrich our cultural heritage and an economic development strategy.

From a strictly financial standpoint, the effort of the Québec State in cultural matters distinguishes itself from that of other provinces with a per capita contribution largely superior

to the Canadian average (\$373 vs. \$292). Taxpayers play an important and crucial role in supporting the development of cultural industries through nearly \$1 billion in direct assistance, tax credits for cultural enterprises, government purchases. As consumers, taxpayers find it difficult to sustain the efforts of the private and collective sectors in culture. Québec families spend about \$551 annually compared to \$667 for the average Canadian family. The difference is even larger when we compare ourselves with Ontario (\$721/yr.).

The Coalition believes that Québec has made the right choice in supporting the cultural milieu in significant fashion. But it also believes more can be done. The Coalition proposes an action plan around two precise goals.

The first will stimulate demand for Québec cultural products right here at home while the second objective is to bolster efforts to export cultural products and ensure proper funding of large tourist events with cultural overtones. To reach these goals, the Coalition will increase budgets allocated to culture, notably the sums dedicated to its promotion and the development of local, international and digital markets.

#### **COMMITMENT 91: SUPPORT ARTS AND CULTURE FOR YOUTHS**

As a source of development and personal growth, the arts are essential to our youth. But youngsters have to be able to come face to face with the arts to truly embrace them. To this end, the Coalition intends to increase education budgets to allow for schools and pre-school age children to attend Québec cultural productions. Schools will be encouraged to develop long-term cooperation projects with local and/or regional cultural institutions.

#### **COMMITMENT 92: PROMOTE THE CULTURE OF FIRST NATIONS**

The linguistic and cultural heritage of First Nations constitutes a precious heritage that must be preserved, enriched and better known. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will set aside important sums to ensure its promotion and preservation. First Nations will be consulted to work together in order to channel the new resources.

#### **COMMITMENT 93: OPENNESS TO THE WORLD**

Québec's development depends on our collective capacity to develop new markets. In all disciplines, we need to showcase our products and services on the international stage to ensure the development of ambitious productions, while offering Quebecers products that can rival foreign cultural products. The State has an important role of supporting new market development initiatives through State corporations and the *ministère des Relations internationales*.

The Coalition intends to increase the budget dedicated to exporting Québec cultural products in the international and digital markets. It will supply additional international development aid to the *Société de développement des entreprises culturelles* and to the *Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec*. It will also support the *ministère des Relations internationales* in order to develop a Québec cultural calendar in each of the foreign delegations and promote Québec's artistic, culinary and touristic specificity.

#### **COMMITMENT 94: FUNDING MAJOR CULTURAL EVENTS**

Considering their important impact on the development of tourism in Québec, large cultural events must be able to rely on adequate and long-term funding. Faced with the federal government's lack of funding, the Québec government has no other choice than to fund these events. Furthermore, a development plan for existing public promotion installations will be proposed to the artistic community and to all Quebecers. This should lead to better use of our costly infrastructures. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will inject additional funds to ensure the long-term financial and artistic survival of these events and help make them better known on the international stage while allowing them to be held in quality installations.

# CONCRETE STEPS FOR A REAL CHANGE

Headed by a competent leader and surrounded by a strong team, the Coalition Avenir Québec wants to take Québec out of its lethargy and out of the quarrels between the old parties. It will put the priorities and needs of people before other options, labels and special interests.

The program of the Coalition is the only one with a vision for the future that proposes concrete measures to revitalize Québec.

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**1**  
**SWEEPING CLEANUP  
TO ELIMINATE  
CORRUPTION  
AND WASTE**

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**2**  
**5 MORE HOURS OF HIGH  
SCHOOL WEEKLY**

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**3**  
**A FAMILY DOCTOR  
FOR EVERYONE**

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**4**  
**\$1,000 TAX REDUCTION  
FOR MIDDLE CLASS  
FAMILIES**

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**5**  
**A QUÉBEC OWNING ITS  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
AND CONTROLLING  
ITS ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

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