



## NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Residential Schools: Our children have suffered enough

Wendake, September 1, 2020 – It is with enthusiasm, but without forgetting the tragedies of the past, that the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) and the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) welcomed the federal government's initiative regarding the Residential School System. Indeed, earlier today, Ministers Wilkinson and Bennett announced the designation of national historic sites for residential schools, starting with Manitoba and Nova Scotia. This was one of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. The government and the people of Canada have a duty to remember this greatly tragic episode, and this gesture is a step in the right direction.

For more than a century, the Government of Canada subsidized the education of 150,000 Indigenous youth who were sent to nearly 130 institutions. The losses suffered in terms of identity, language and culture are incalculable, as are the psychological and sociological impacts of the Residential Schools.

“Unfortunately, despite the progress made over the past few years, it is obvious that a lot of work remains to be done to ensure the wellness of our children and families. For instance, the rate of First Nations children placed in foster families by the Director of Youth Protection (DYP) is close to eight times higher than that of non-Indigenous children. Clearly, something remains wrong with the system.” said Derek Montour, President of the FNLQHSSC Board of Directors.

“Today, we salute the actions of the Government of Canada, which has admitted that its colonial policies have caused enormous suffering among our people. Now, what we want is for Quebec to finally recognize the jurisdiction of our authorities in matters of child and family services. This is the only way to guarantee culturally appropriate services, which take into account the specific realities and characteristics of our nations”, added Lance Haymond, Acting Chief of the AFNQL.

The two organizations are therefore taking this opportunity following today's announcement to call on the provincial government to stop challenging by reference to the Court of Appeal the constitutionality of An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families (C-92), which came into force on January 1, 2020. They are suggesting that Quebec should instead focus on working with First Nations

governments. History shows that Indigenous children have suffered enough. Now is the time to take concrete actions to ensure a promising future for them.

**About the AFNQL**

The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador is the political organization that brings together 43 Chiefs of the First Nations in Quebec and Labrador.

**About the FNQLHSSC**

The First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission is a non-profit organization that assists Quebec First Nations in achieving their health, wellness, culture and self-determination goals.

– 30 –

**For more information:**

Alain Garon, AFNQL  
Communications Advisor  
[agaron@apnql.com](mailto:agaron@apnql.com)  
418-254-4620 – [www.apnql.com](http://www.apnql.com)

Annie Brisson-Proulx, FNQLHSSC  
Communications Web and Social Media Officer  
[annie.brisson-proulx@cssspnql.com](mailto:annie.brisson-proulx@cssspnql.com)  
418-842-1540, extension 2304 – [www.cssspnql.com](http://www.cssspnql.com)