



Assemblée des Premières Nations
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FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC
AND LABRADOR HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMISSION

NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Laurent Commission report: It is up to the First Nations to secure the future and wellness of their children

Wendake, May 3, 2021 – Following the awaited unveiling of the report from the Special Commission on the Rights of the Child and Youth Protection (Laurent Commission), the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) and the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) would like to thank the commissioners, particularly the President, Régine Laurent, and her Vice-Presidents, André Lebon and Michel Rivard, for their openness to including a chapter dedicated to First Nations and Inuit and recommending changes to Quebec legislation based on the needs expressed during the hearings. However, the time has come for our nations to determine the future and wellness of our families and children through child and family services that are designed and administered by our own governments.

“For a long time, Canada and Quebec have acted as if they knew better than us for what was good for our people. Clearly, they were wrong. For example, data shows that First Nations children are six times more likely than non-Indigenous children to have their security or their development deemed by the youth protection system to be compromised. Thanks to *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (Bill C-92), we have the opportunity to regain control over our lives, and that’s exactly what we intend to do,” said Derek Montour, President of the FNQLHSSC Board of Directors.

“We welcome the efforts of the Laurent Commission on improving the application of the Quebec Youth Protection Act but our primary focus, as First Nations Chiefs, will be to continue focusing our efforts on supporting First Nations jurisdictions exercising their inherent rights in child and family services, which includes legislative authority in relation to those services and authority to administer and enforce laws made under that legislative authority,” continued Richard O’Bomsawin, Chief of Odanak, political representative of the regional Committee of Experts and member of the Chiefs Committee on Child and Family Services and Self-Determination.

“First Nations have the right to self-determination, including the inherent right to self-government, which includes jurisdiction over child and family services. We reiterate that we will never accept that our rights are subordinated to those of another people, especially when it comes to the wellness of our children, youth and families. We believe

that reforming the legislative framework for youth protection in Quebec, in a complementary fashion with and in support of the governance and laws of the First Nations, is a fundamental matter. We are counting on the full cooperation of the Government of Quebec in this regard,” concluded the Chief of the AFNQL, Ghislain Picard.

About the AFNQL

The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador is a political organization that unites 43 First Nations Chiefs 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 supports First Nations in Quebec in achieving their objectives in terms of health, wellness, culture and self-determination.

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