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THE APNQL PROPOSES SYSTEMIC RECONCILIATION TO THE LEGAULT GOVERNMENT

After three years in power, Premier François Legault wants to breathe new life into his government. The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) hopes that he will turn a reactive government into a government inspired by a real desire for a respectful relationship with First Nations and not by its own popularity rating. It is difficult to explain the Legault government's lack of strategy when it has had the Viens Commission's report in hand for two years now; a report aimed directly at preventing situations such as the one experienced at the Joliette hospital. A system-wide strategy. A strategy focused on systemic reconciliation.

In order to contribute to the Legault government's second wind, the AFNQL offers the following suggestion along with a few reminders. In view of saving precious time, the AFNQL proposes the following definition of systemic reconciliation: systemic reconciliation with First Nations occurs when the entire system, i.e. the Government of Quebec and all the institutions under its responsibility, under the leadership of its Premier, actively work to restore harmony and respect towards First Nations. Let us be very clear here: this is the only way to put an end to the social scourge of discrimination and systemic racism.

The AFNQL also reminds the Legault government of some of the proposals made by the Chiefs since the beginning of its mandate.

One of these proposals is the establishment of the AFNQL-Quebec Political Table. The AFNQL Chiefs made this proposal to Premier Legault who agreed to the idea. After two meetings of the Political Table, one on health and social services, the other on public security, it is clear that like the CAQ government, the AFNQL-Quebec Political Table is in dire need of a second wind. The AFNQL-Quebec Political Table must be inspired by respect for First Nations' jurisdictions rather than the status quo and the imposition of the provincial government's jurisdiction. This is one of the essential foundations of systemic reconciliation.

Another recent proposal of the AFNQL made not only to the government but to all Quebec parliamentarians, is the holding, as soon as possible, of a Special Parliamentary Commission on the relationship with First Peoples. Such a meeting was held only once, in 1983, under the government of René Lévesque. The reference to René Lévesque here is not by chance. Among the subjects addressed during the Parliamentary Commission as proposed by the AFNQL, several are related to the nationalist agenda of the Legault government. The AFNQL Chiefs are the first to understand the importance of preserving the pride of a people, its language, its culture and its

territory. However, the AFNQL Chiefs are convinced that a nation that respects itself and seeks recognition does not have to impose its supremacy on other nations that share the same territory. Colonial mentality and narrow-mindedness, under the pretext of nationalism or otherwise, have no place in a society committed to systemic reconciliation.

A third proposal of the AFNQL is the holding, next November, of an Economic Rendezvous involving many economic actors from civil society in addition to the federal and provincial governments. The Legault government agreed to be involved and is actively collaborating in the realization of this event. The AFNQL hopes that this important Rendezvous on First Nations' participation in economic recovery will witness this second wind of the Legault government through the demonstration of a real willingness to move away from the status quo and preconceived ideas.