

**Assemblée des Premières Nations  
Québec-Labrador**

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**OPEN LETTER FROM THE CHIEFS OF THE ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS QUEBEC-LABRADOR**

**RESPECT FOR LAND RIGHTS IS  
INSEPARABLE FROM A SUSTAINABLE FIRST NATIONS ECONOMY**

*Wendake, November 22, 2021* - On the eve of the Grand Economic Circle of Indigenous Peoples and Quebec, it appears essential for us to remind the Legault government that any and all prospects aimed at supporting a sustainable economy for our Nations must absolutely and without hesitation, create space for the inevitable and long overdue discussion on lands issues. The only way that First Nations will ever attain true and full participation in the Quebec economy is by finally having this discussion, openly and honestly, and truly pave the way for First Nations communities to blossom and prosper in the same way that non-indigenous communities can, and do, in Quebec.

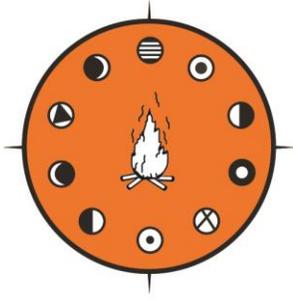
In a few days, elected officials, First Nations and Quebec business representatives as well as representatives from the general population will be gathering to discuss and explore ways to accelerate the economic growth of our Nations which have been on the margins of development in this province for far too long. We would like to thank all the businesses and organizations that have agreed to take part in this exercise and who are demonstrating concrete commitments to the full participation of Indigenous Peoples in the economy.

The context in which our Peoples are currently evolving requires a major turnaround, particularly in order to eliminate the enormous gap that separates the living conditions of Indigenous Peoples from those of the general population in the province. In order to materialize this "turnaround" that we must collectively make, we must address several issues that are too often hidden, such as the housing crisis in our communities, the unemployment rate that is three times higher for our populations and the difficult access to financing for our entrepreneurs.

And since economic development is inextricably linked to our socio-economic future, we have to talk about it!

We would like to remind you of this today, because we have too often experienced this type of meeting where the Quebec government tried to avoid recognizing the inextricable link between our lands and socio-economic development of our communities.

Beyond the opportunity presented by this major economic event, it is essential for us to reiterate our determination to have our rights, our ancestral territories and our self-determining governments respected. The AFNQL Chiefs have sent Premier Legault the text of a Declaration that reminds the Quebec government of their (the Chiefs) shared principles on the question of lands and resources and on the approach to their development. The Chiefs request that Mr. Legault's



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government be mindful and respectful of this Declaration. The fundamental principles that must guide the relationship between our governments and that of Quebec are clear:

- The right to free, prior and informed consent in decision-making of non-indigenous governments for any project impacting our lands and resources;

- The right to government to government co-management, through joint and respectful land management practices, including decision-making;
- Respect by non-indigenous governments for the sacred relationship between land use, land development, resource use and the preservation of our ways of life, languages and cultures;
- The right to economic benefits, including the sharing of natural resources and the collection of royalties from past, present and future use of our lands and resources.

The Grand Economic Circle of Indigenous Peoples and Quebec event will be a great opportunity for the Legault government to distinguish itself from its predecessors by showing political courage in addressing the issues that concern our ancestral lands and resources. If Quebec enjoys an economic status that may be the envy of other governments, it is largely due to the exploitation of resources on our lands. Is it not high time that First Nations enjoy the same opportunities?