

## **Public Inquiry Commission Created to Examine Relations between Quebec's Public Services and First Nations**

**Wendake, December 21, 2016** – The Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ) welcomes the Government of Quebec's announcement confirming the creation of a public inquiry commission tasked with examining relations between the province's public services (police, justice, health, social services and child protection) and First Nations. The commission is mandated with profiling the systemic issues leading to discriminatory practices and will propose solutions aimed at eradicating these practices within the province's public services. The commission's work will cover the last 15 years. It will issue an official report by November 2018.

This inquiry commission is an adequate response by the provincial government that will shed light on an issue that affects all of Quebec society. Indeed, the government is responsible for ensuring the safety of all Quebecers. "This commission will enable us to examine the underlying causes of this social crisis and the realities First Nations face. The commission is an essential step in promoting real dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders as part of a concerted effort not only to put an end to the systemic racism embedded in our institutions, but also to rebuild trust," said RCAAQ President Christine Jean.

"It was imperative that we look into Quebec's specific context. For us, a huge milestone was marked today. We see the Government's concern in the wake of extremely unfortunate events and its real commitment to casting light on their negative impacts on Aboriginal peoples' lives. These stem from practices that are deeply embedded in Quebec's public services," added RCAAQ Executive Director Tanya Sirois. The RCAAQ would like to again pay tribute to the courageous Aboriginal women who have brought this social issue to light, making it a matter of public concern for the Government of Quebec.

In the wake of this social crisis, Native Friendship Centres will continue to offer their support and assistance to urban Aboriginals by providing a continuum of services, including psychosocial resources, in a safe environment that is respectful of Aboriginal cultures.

The RCAAQ groups seven member Native Friendship Centres and one service point in Chibougamau, Joliette, La Tuque, Montréal, Senneterre, Sept-Îles, Trois-Rivières and Val-d'Or. Two Friendship Centres are under development in Roberval and Maniwaki. The Quebec Native Friendship Centres work to improve the quality of life of urban Aboriginal people, promote Aboriginal culture and build bridges between peoples.

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