

DECLARATION OF THE COURT OF QUÉBEC WITH REGARD TO THE FIRST NATIONS AND THE INUIT

CONSIDERING the numerous recommendations made over the past 30 years to several government departments and institutions, including those stemming from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls (2019), the Commission of Inquiry into Relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: Listening, Reconciliation and Progress (2019) (Viens Commission), the in-house reports by judges Jean-Charles Coutu and Maurice Galarneau in 1995 and 2008 respectively, and the report by judges Lucille Chabot and Daniel Bédard in 2023;

WHEREAS only some of these recommendations have been carried out by government authorities, whose responsibility is to ensure adequate and adapted justice services to First Nations and Inuit, particularly those served by the Itinerant Court on the territories of Côte-Nord (Innu and Naskapi Nations), Eeyou Istchee Baie-James (Cree Nation) and Nunavik (Inuit Nation), in accordance with section 12.2.1 of the *Northeastern Quebec Agreement* and sections 18.0.7 and 20.0.8 of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*;

WHEREAS on February 9, 2024, the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed the constitutionality of the *First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families Act* (S.C. 2019, c. 24);

WHEREAS judges' decision-making power must be exercised with a knowledge of the history, values, traditions, cultures and customs of First Nations and Inuit members;

WHEREAS the Court of Québec wishes to establish a true collaboration with First Nations and Inuit in order to achieve concrete results and render adapted and adequate judicial services;

CONSIDERING the report by Judges Lucille Chabot and Daniel Bédard entitled "LA COUR DU QUÉBEC, LES PREMIÈRES NATIONS ET LES INUITS - PROPOSITION POUR UNE DESSERTÉ QUALITATIVE, MODULÉE ET ÉQUILIBRÉE DE LA JUSTICE" (THE COURT OF QUÉBEC, THE FIRST NATIONS AND THE INUIT - PROPOSAL FOR A QUALITATIVE, MODULATED AND BALANCED ACCESS TO JUSTICE);

THE COURT OF QUÉBEC UNDERTAKES TO :

PRIORITIZE effective and respectful justice for First Nations and Inuit people;

CREATE AND MAINTAIN channels of communication with First Nations and Inuit, to enable the development of reciprocal bonds of trust;

CONSULT with First Nations and Inuit to review the judicial services provided by the Court of Québec to them, in order to better meet their needs;

TAKE ACTION, show initiative and leadership, within the scope of its jurisdictions, by taking the necessary steps with the Québec government to obtain its full cooperation.

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