

DECLARATION OF THE COURT OF QUÉBEC FOR JUDGES AND PRESIDING JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

WHEREAS the judges of the Court of Québec sit in many First Nations and Inuit communities throughout the territory of Québec to render judicial services according to the jurisdictions assigned to them by the Courts of Justice Act (CQLR, chapter T-16).

WHEREAS the Court of Québec is aware of the difficulties and issues involved in providing legal services to members of these communities and takes note of the various reports filed in this regard, notably that of Judges Lucille Chabot and Daniel Bédard.

WHEREAS the Court of Québec is aware of the need to rapidly implement the main recommendations made by the various reports.

WHEREAS the Court of Québec is aware of the urgent need to implement measures to ensure the proper functioning of the Itinerant Court on the territory of Eeyou Istchee Baie-James (Cree Nation), Nunavik (Inuit Nation) and the North Shore (Innu and Naskapi Nations).

WHEREAS to achieve this, it is necessary that the judicial services rendered by the Itinerant Court no longer be assumed at the local or regional level, but that they be under the responsibility of the entire Court of Québec.

THE COURT OF QUÉBEC DECLARES AS FOLLOWS:

Itinerant Court activities are now a common priority for the ten coordination regions of the Court of Quebec.

A committee appointed for this purpose will continue to reflect on the structure of the Itinerant Court's activities.

The Court of Québec endorses the recommendation contained in the report by Judges Lucille Chabot and Daniel Bédard to create the position of Associate Chief Judge responsible for First Nations and Inuit justice.

The Court of Québec will assess the needs of the Itinerant Court in terms of the number of judges positions to be dedicated to it and will make a request to the Minister of Justice to open additional positions, if necessary.

Several measures will be put in place soon to support the judges sitting on the Itinerant Court and make its activities more efficient, including the following:

- **Creation of a team of puisne and assistant judges** assigned to the Itinerant Court on a priority basis to sit in the communities served, regardless of the judges' place of residence;
- **Development of an assignment structure** for these judges;
- **Adoption of internal guidelines and policies for the operation of the Itinerant Court**, pending an amendment to the Regulation of the Court of Québec¹;

¹ CQLR, c. C-25.01, r. 9.

- **Creation of a permanent team** dedicated to implementing various recommendations arising from reports submitted to the management of the Court of Québec in 1995, 2008, 2020 and 2023, including the short-term action proposals made to the Chief Judge by the Advisory Committee on Indigenous Matters on February 21, 2024;
- **Set up a welcome, mentoring and training program for judges sitting on the Itinerant Court;**
- **Steps taken to create** a new position of Associate Chief Judge responsible for First Nations and Inuit justice.

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