



Collective for a Poverty-free Quebec

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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate publication

The Collective for a Poverty-free Quebec launches a signature-gathering campaign **COMMON MISSION: building a poverty-free Quebec**

QUÉBEC, November 28th 2007 – The “COMMON MISSION: Building a poverty-free Quebec” campaign was launched today. It is centered around a petition to the National Assembly which has three main goals: obtain universal access to quality public services, increase minimum wage to a level which makes it possible to work one's way out of poverty, and increase social benefits to insure health and dignity to those lacking sufficient revenue. Signing this petition is a civic contribution toward a poverty-free Quebec and human rights, leading to a society enriched by all of its people.

These demands are supported by a round of public consultation which included over 4,000 people across Quebec, based on the following facts:

- hundreds of thousands of Quebec citizens are deprived of the basic living conditions necessary for self-realization and participation in social affairs;
- hundreds of thousands of workers, mainly women, are paid such poor wages that, even when working full time, it is impossible to work themselves out of poverty;
- public services are increasingly downsized, and tariffs or other conditions for participation are pushed to unreasonable levels;
- the low income cut-off level is set at \$21,202 per year (2006) for single persons;
- the level of the Market basket measure, including basic goods and services, is set by Statistics Canada at \$13,267 per year (2007), and Canada's public pension program guarantees revenue of at least \$13,636 per year (2007);
- universal public services are necessary for a democratic and egalitarian society to function .

Which is why the signatories ask the National Assembly, in order to implement the spirit of the *Act to combat poverty and social exclusion*, to see to it that the government take the necessary measures so that:

- all citizens have indiscriminate universal access to quality public services;
- minimum wage reaches at least \$10.16 an hour (2007) and be reviewed annually, in order to allow single persons working 40 hours per week the possibility of working their way out of poverty;
- social benefits increase to ensure every person a revenue equal to the Market basket measure - \$13,267 per year (2007), and be adjusted annually, so that all may preserve their health and dignity.

In November of 2000, the *Collective for a Poverty-free Quebec* proposed legislation to eliminate poverty in Quebec, following province-wide public consultation. Two years later, the National Assembly unanimously voted to adopt the *Act to combat poverty and social exclusion*.



Active since 1998, the *Collective for a Poverty-free Quebec's* membership unites 32 provincial organisations whose work shapes issues of public interest, community affairs, workers' rights, religious, feminist, student or regional affairs; regional collectives are present in fifteen Quebec regions. These organisations share a mission to fight against poverty, defend civic rights and promote social justice. Hundreds of groups and individuals from many sectors of civil society form the *Collective's* support network.

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List of member organisations:

Association québécoise des banques alimentaires et des Moissons (AQBAM) • Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI) • ATD Quart-Monde • Au bas de l'échelle • Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins (CECOSOL) • Carrefour de participation, ressourcement et formation (CPRF) • Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD) • Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) • Centre Justice et Foi (CJF) • Collectif des entreprises d'insertion du Québec • Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) • Confédération québécoise des coopératives d'habitation (CQCH) • Conférence religieuse canadienne (CRC) • Fédération des associations des familles monoparentales et recomposées du Québec (FAFMRQ) • Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ) • Fédération des infirmières et des infirmiers du Québec (FIIQ) • Fédération des locataires de HLM du Québec (FLHLMQ) • Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ) • Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec (FECQ) • Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec (FEUQ) • Front commun des personnes assistées sociales du Québec (FCPASQ) • Groupe Solidarité Justice • Ligue des droits et libertés • L'R des centres de femmes du Québec • Mouvement québécois des camps familiaux (MQCF) • Ordre professionnel des travailleurs sociaux du Québec • Regroupement des Auberges du coeur du Québec • Regroupement des cuisines collectives du Québec (RCCQ) • Regroupement des groupes populaires en alphabétisation du Québec (RGPAQ) • Regroupement des ressources alternatives en santé mentale du Québec (RRASMQ) • Regroupement québécois des intervenants et des intervenantes en action communautaire, en CLSC et en centre de santé (RQIIAC) • Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec (SFPQ).

