

DEVELOPMENT
POLICY FOR THE

Nord- du-Québec

REGION



Québec 

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Nord- du-Québec

REGION



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Message from the Minister of State for Regions and Minister for Industry and Trade

In recent years, the government has considerably built up its partnerships with Québec's regions. In this respect, the *Policy Supporting Local and Regional Development*, adopted in 1997, proved to be a crucial first step.

The *Development Policy for the Nord-du-Québec Region*, adopted by the government in April of 2001, follows closely on the heels of the consensus whereby Québec's regions should have the necessary tools to assume their own development. It is through a renewed partnership that development projects will flourish, thus providing structure and jobs in the Nord-du-Québec region.

It is no coincidence that the government is unveiling, at the same time, its development policy for the Nord-du-Québec region and the measures targeting this region in the Resource Region Economic Development Strategy. The policy's underlying message of consistency and concerted effort in the region played a major role in preparing the Strategy's measures.

The *Development Policy for the Nord-du-Québec Region* will also help guide government action in the various sectors of activity. By having a development policy that is specifically geared toward its needs, the Nord-du-Québec region has been recognized as having a special place within the government's action priorities.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the remarkable contribution of all those in the community who helped formulate this policy. One such person is Michel Létourneau, MNA for Ungava and parliamentary assistant to the premier, who, these past years, has played a pivotal role in the process leading up to the *Development Policy for the Nord-du-Québec Region*.

The adoption of this policy expresses a genuine willingness to build and vitalize this region, both economically and socially. This policy marks a turning point for the Nord-du-Québec region in that it offers promising prospects for the future. It is now up to all of us, by rallying together and banking on the cooperation and strengths of the community, to make this happen.



Gilles Baril



Message from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister Responsible for the Nord-du-Québec Region

I am proud to present the Development Policy for the Nord-du-Québec Region, in which the government expresses, to the region's population, its determination to provide exceptional support to the development of this vast part of Québec.

These past years, the government and the population in the Nord-du-Québec region have collectively increased their mutual understanding of what should constitute a development approach that would be global, integrated and capable of adapting to the region's diversity. However, there is still much to be done. This policy, the result of two years of discussions and consultations, is an important milestone in the building of the Nord-du-Québec of tomorrow.

Composed of three groups, the Jamesians and two First Nations, i.e. the Cree Nation and the Inuit Nation, the Nord-du-Québec region is considered unique. It also accounts for 55% of Québec's land area. The Policy is waging that it is possible for this region, despite its diverse population, to put forth strategies that respect the values of each group and that are geared toward the specific development conditions imposed by such a vast territory.

With this policy, the government also proposes to enrich the partnership it has forged with the Nord-du-Québec population. The policy's three underlying principles are: a development that encompasses sustainable development, inhabitants taking responsibility for their development and, finally, the recognition and integration into Québec governance of the specific character of the Nord-du-Québec region and its development.

The government and the Nord-du-Québec population now have a new and unique development tool, tailored to the region's needs. At present, it is up to us to build on it, while taking everyone's best interests into account, particularly those of young people who aspire to living and reaching their full potential in this magnificent part of Québec.


Guy Chevette



Map of the Nunavut territory showing the coastline, major water bodies (Baie d'Hudson, Baie James, Détroit d'Hudson, Baie d'Ungava), and numerous communities marked with dots and labels. The map includes a grid of latitude and longitude lines. A note on the right side reads "Frontière 1827 du Canada avec l'Ontario".

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THE NORD-DU-QUÉBEC REGION:
THE HUMAN, ADMINISTRATIVE
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Chapter 1

1.1

The Territory, Inhabitants and Special Characteristics of the Nord-du-Québec Region

The Nord-du-Québec region established since 1987

Created in 1987, the Nord-du-Québec administrative region covers 55% of Québec's total surface area, or 840,000 km². The sheer size of this territory, its small population, the thousand-year-old history of its First Nations and more recently that of the Jamesians¹, combined with northern conditions, are so many factors that give the Nord-du-Québec region a unique status within Québec as a whole.

Three groups of citizens live in the Nord-du-Québec region: the Jamesians, the Crees and the Inuit. Each group seeks recognition and the right to an identity built on its own history and culture, on its belonging to a territory and, in the case of the Crees and Inuit, on their belonging to a First Nation.

The Naskapi community finds its home in Kawawachikamach, which is located in the Côte-Nord administrative region. Although this community is not included per se in the Nord-du-Québec region, it nevertheless enjoys considerable rights granted to it under the Northeastern Québec Agreement (NQA). Several of these rights are confirmed in the Nord-du-Québec region, namely above the 55th parallel, i.e. a municipal organization, a seat in the Kativik Regional Government, Category I and II lands, and hunting, fishing and trapping rights.

5000 years of history

Some 6000 years ago, with the retreat of the Wisconsin glacier, then of the Tyrrel Sea, all the right conditions for occupying northern Québec were in place. Owing to better weather and more abundant vegetation, animals and then man trod upon this immense land in search of food. From the north, the Inuit's great ancestors crossed the Hudson Strait, more than 5000 years ago. From the south, groups of Amerindians from the Great Lakes made their way toward the north, following, in all likelihood, the migrating animals that ensured their very survival. In the first millennium of our era, these groups had all been displaced, either culturally, demographically or forcefully, by the direct ancestors of the Inuit, Crees and Naskapi. Their descendants were the people the Europeans encountered over 400 years ago.

The last major migration

The Jamesians are the last group of people to settle in the Nord-du-Québec region. The emergence of new economic activities based on logging, mining and hydroelectric development, brought new permanent workers into the region as of the 1930s and 1940s. Moreover, in addition to the Jamesians, there is also another non-Native population living in Nunavik, accounting for about 10% of the total population of this area.

This coexistence between the First Nations and the non-Native community undoubtedly gives the Nord-du-Québec region a unique socio-political character. Any government policy regarding this region must be developed with due consideration given to this specific reality.

Major agreements for the North

It should also be noted that the Nations living in the Nord-du-Québec region along with the Naskapi Nation, are signatories of the major northern agreements. These agreements provide the legal and administrative framework within which the Québec government and these Nations work together.

¹ The term Jamesian refers to the non-Natives of the Nord-du-Québec region living south of the 55th parallel.

1.2 An Administrative Region Still in Search Of Its Identity

Nouveau-Québec In 1966, the Québec government adopted its first territorial organization model based on ten administrative regions. One of these regions, that of Nouveau-Québec, covered the entire territory north of the 50th parallel.

Current region Twenty years later, in 1987, Québec revised this regional territorial organization. The existing Nouveau-Québec administrative region was enlarged and renamed the Nord-du-Québec administrative region. It now comprises the James Bay territory found between the 49th and 55th parallels and the Nunavik territory found between the 55th parallel and Québec's northern tip.

Legal framework of the region's municipalities

A special legal system in the Nord-du-Québec region

The legal system that applies in the case of municipalities in the Nord-du-Québec region is different in that the region does not have a regional county municipality. In addition, each of the three regional entities is subject to specific legal provisions contained in separate pieces of legislation.

For the Jamesian territory, the legal framework is provided for in the *James Bay Region Development Act*. This Act created the James Bay Development Corporation (JBDC) and the James Bay Municipality (JBM). The latter encompasses an area extending from the 49th and the 55th parallel, with the exception of Category I lands and the enclaved municipalities of Chapais, Chibougamau, Lebel-sur-Quévillon and Matagami. The enclaved municipalities along with the JBM are subject to the *Cities and Towns Act*.

The *Cree Villages and Naskapi Village Act* converted unoccupied Category 1-B lands used by Cree and Naskapi communities into village municipalities. This Act contains various provisions outlining the powers and operation of these municipalities. The local governments of the nine Cree communities are for their part under federal jurisdiction. The federal legislator granted them increased autonomy in 1984 by abolishing the system of Indian reservations. The Québec government completed the legal framework for this territory when it passed legislation creating the Cree Regional Authority, which shoulders various responsibilities, such as managing the compensation granted to Cree communities under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement.

The territory north of the 55th parallel, except for the Category 1-A and 1-B lands of Whapmagoostui (Poste-à-la-Baleine), is subject to the *Act respecting Northern villages and the Kativik Regional Government*. This Act established the Kativik Regional Government (KRG), a supramunicipal entity, and the 14 northern villages. It also sets out the powers granted to each of these authorities. The KRG council is composed of one representative from each northern village and one from the Naskapi village. The powers of the northern villages are comparable to those provided for in the *Cities and Towns Act*.

**Specific provisions
required for northern
villages and
municipalities**

Due to this particular legal framework, it is often necessary to add special provisions to make the general powers granted municipalities elsewhere in Québec applicable to the municipalities and northern villages of the Nord-du-Québec region. For the Jamesians particularly, the challenge consists of devising an administrative system that will make it possible for them to fully assume their responsibilities in terms of territorial management, organization and development.

1.3

Regional Demographics

**Vast territory – sparse
population**

The demographic portrait of the Nord-du-Québec region is characterized by a sparse regional population compared with the vastness of the territory and by marked differences in the demographic development of the three population groups formed by the Crees, the Inuit and the Jamesians.

According to 1996 data, the Nord-du-Québec region accounts for 0.5% of Québec's total population, or 38,395 inhabitants. The Jamesians represent 48% of this number, i.e. 18,331 individuals. The Cree Nation numbers 11,349, or 29% of the total. Finally, Nunavik represents 23% of the regional population with 8715 people.

**Strong growth in
Cree and Inuit
populations**

Population growth for the Cree and Inuit Nations has seen a sharp upward trend. From 1981 to 1996, the Inuit population increased almost twofold. In the same period, the Cree population rose 60%. The birth rate of these two First Nations is almost twice that elsewhere in Québec. Consequently, both are characterized by a very young population, with up to 70% of the population of some communities in the 0-25 year age group. While positive, this growth factor is not without enormous challenges in terms of integrated, sustainable development and job creation.

**A decline in the
Jamesian population**

Despite a birthrate which is higher than the Québec average, the Jamesian population dropped 30% over the period from 1981-1996. The completion of Hydro-Québec's construction projects, combined with several mine closures, caused successive waves of Jamesians leaving the region, thus contributing to this demographic decline. These events have had significant adverse effects on the community's structure, especially in the service sector. This situation also led to the shutdown of Joutel and seriously shook the economic and social foundations of the town of Radisson.

1.4

From 1975 to Today: the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement and the Northeastern Québec Agreement

Historic signing of agreements in the 1970s

The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA), concluded with the Crees and Inuit, and the Northeastern Québec Agreement (NQA), signed with the Naskapi, outlined the mutual obligations of the various parties concerned, namely the Québec government, the Canadian government, the Crees, the Inuit and the Naskapi. To date, the agreements have been amended by 12 supplementary agreements.

Several laws and programs stem from the northern agreements

In accordance with these northern agreements, Québec has enacted, over the past 25 years, various laws. It has also implemented a series of programs providing technical, institutional and financial assistance to the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Nations. Depending on the provisions of the agreements applying to each of the Nations concerned, these actions cover most of the major areas of public life that come under the responsibility of the Québec government.

Outlining mutual expectations and understandings

The northern agreements have defined the scope and nature of the relations existing since the mid-1970s between the Québec government and the three signing Nations. As these agreements came into effect, over the past 25 years, they have led to the implementation of institutions, programs and permanent forums that have completely changed all aspects of public life on the James Bay and Nunavik territories.

Relations between the Cree Nation and the Québec government before the courts

The turn these relations took within the northern agreements has however led to a number of legal challenges initiated by the Cree Nation. Legal wrangling over the interpretation and the implementation of the JBNQA have dominated relations between the Cree Nation and the Québec government since the early 1990s.

The Inuit Nation takes the political route

The Inuit Nation, for its part, has taken the political route of negotiation. The Québec government, the Canadian government and the Inuit Nation agreed to create the Nunavik Commission, which would be responsible for making recommendations on a form of government for Nunavik. To do this, the three parties recognized the need to work with, as a starting point, the existing elements already successfully negotiated in the JBNQA. They have also agreed to take into account, if necessary, the negotiations regarding Nunavik self-government, which took place in 1994-1995 and in 1997-1998.

The northern agreements remain the basis of the relations between the Québec government and the Nations that have signed these agreements.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE JAMES BAY AND NORTHERN QUÉBEC AGREEMENT²

The main provisions of the JBNQA

The Agreement is the end result of negotiations among various parties who succeeded in striking a balance among their conflicting claims. The Native peoples claimed that they held the rights over all the territory, whereas the governments maintained the opposite. From a legal viewpoint, the situation in which the Crees and the Inuit found themselves was vague and ill-defined. The extent of the federal government's power was never clearly stated and Québec's actual area of authority was shrouded in ambiguity. How was all of this resolved?

The signatories looked at these issues in a simple and practical way. The Crees and the Inuit accepted to waive their claims to rights, whatever they were, and accepted the extinction of these claims, by statute of the Parliament of Canada, in exchange for the recognition of clear and well-defined rights and benefits, land and financial compensation.

Québec's authority over the entire territory was recognized by all the signatories and the amendments to the "laws in 1912 relative to extending Québec's boundaries" were adopted.

The parcels of land on which Cree villages are located (Land IA: 3299.7 km²) were entrusted to the federal government by Québec so as to reflect the desire expressed by the Crees to remain under the authority of the federal government. The Inuit Nation however chose Québec's authority, and has only kept indirect links with the federal level of government.

In addition to the rights and benefits provided by the Agreement, the Crees and the Inuit received confirmation that they would enjoy the same rights and benefits as all citizens of Québec and Canada.

Land regime

Land is at the very base of the Cree and Inuit cultures. The needs and interests of their Nations dictated that a land regime be introduced and that it be equitable and meet both the needs of Native peoples and Québec.

For this reason, the signatories have agreed to divide the territory into three categories of land. For simplification purposes, they have been called: "Category I lands, Category II lands and Category III lands."

Category I lands are allocated to each Cree and Inuit community for their exclusive use. These lands are directly in or on the periphery of the villages in which the Crees and Inuit usually live.

Category II lands are adjacent to their land. They are a tract of land, an exclusive hunting and fishing area for the beneficiaries living on Category I lands. They are land under public ownership that can be developed for other purposes, provided that the parcels affected by development are replaced.

As for Category III lands, these are public land on which the Natives do not receive an exclusive right of occupation, but where they can, without any legal limitation, continue, such as they did in the past, their hunting, fishing and trapping activities year round.

2 Free translation of an extract of an article titled *L'univers méconnu de la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois* (The misunderstood world of the James Bay and Nord-du-Québec Agreement), by George Beauchemin (SAA) and published in French in Issue no. 97 of the magazine FORCES, pp. 14-35.

THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
OF THE NORD-DU-QUÉBEC
REGION: A QUESTION
OF RESOURCES

A circular inset image showing three people rock climbing on a steep cliff face. The climbers are silhouetted against a lighter sky. The person at the top is pulling the rope, the middle person is ascending, and the bottom person is at the base of the rope.

Chapter 2

The right to develop is a concept that everyone subscribes to in the Nord-du-Québec region. However, when the issues of development, culture and environment are combined, seemingly disconcerting complex realities quickly emerge. On the one hand, the physical environment of the region is in the North, therefore fragile. On the other hand, the northern agreements have created a special system for protecting the natural and the social environments. It is against this unique backdrop that the region must find its way in terms of social, cultural and economic development, and also in terms of job creation.

**Seeking development
that respects
the quality of life**

The Development Policy for the Nord-du-Québec Region aims at supporting economic development and job creation for and by northerners. However, this shall be done while respecting the environment and the quality of life of the area's residents and by integrating the objective hurdles that regional development is up against. This represents an ambitious challenge that Québec government can only face if it works closely and in harmony with the people that live in the region, namely the Jamesians, the Crees and the Inuit.

2.1 Human Resources

2.1.1 Schooling

**Schooling among
young people in the
Nord-du-Québec
region**

The arrival on the job market of young people with very little schooling is a common characteristic to the region's three groups. Some 63% of the regional population aged 15 years and over have 13 years of schooling or less, compared to 52% for Québec as a whole. Broken down by group, these data represent: Jamesians 58%, Crees 70% and Inuit 67%. The population aged 15 years and older having a university education is 11% in the region compared to 20% for Québec as a whole.

School dropout rate

Another source of concern is the high dropout rate of young people in the region, particularly in the Cree and Inuit communities. This situation requires special attention and efforts by the communities faced with this problem and by the Québec government. The value of education, training and learning must be emphasized.

**Investing in vocational
and technical training**

Vocational and technical training programs are a good way of preparing young people for the job market and must be fostered. The social integration of young people and their entry into the workforce depend, for many of them, on having access to quality regional training programs that are adapted to their needs and aspirations.

Finally, the time has come for the Nord-du-Québec region to take up the challenges presented by new information technologies and communications. The issue of a technological infrastructure gives rise to certain problems that will be dealt with further on in this document. But it may be said here that preparing for the future, in terms of training, requires guidance tools and practices adapted to new technologies. Young people must be taught the skills to be able to get around in the world of new technologies.

2.1.2 Employment

Service sector activities dominate the job market in the North

Most of the jobs held by Native people are in the public service sector. The activities that have brought about economic diversification and new jobs are business development, tourism and the new activities related to construction, communications and transportation. Mining and logging are also, for some communities, economic activities that generate jobs.

In order for Native communities to assume responsibility for their economic development and create jobs, they must first start by diversifying their economic activities and broadening the range of professional jobs currently held by their people. Placing an emphasis on schooling and vocational training among indigenous populations and supporting the creation of small private and social enterprises are avenues that must be considered.

Importance of the private service sector and the mining and forest industries in the James Bay region

As for the Jamesians, 57% of their jobs are related to the service sector, 18% of which are in public administration and 39% in the private sector (trade, transportation, services to businesses). The employment structure in the James Bay region is characterized by the high level of private services along with the activities related to the primary and the processing sectors. Mining and logging are still the economic foundations of the James Bay region.

For the Inuit, the unemployment rate was approximately 14% in 1996. More than 70% of jobs are in the public sector (administration, education, health, public safety, etc.). As for private enterprise, it accounts for most of the jobs in the local co-ops, at the Makivik Corporation and its subsidiaries (particularly at Air Inuit and First Air) and in the mining sector due to the construction of the Raglan mine.

For the Crees, the unemployment rate was 17% in 1996. Slightly more than three quarters of the jobs in the communities stem from public and private activities related to services. This means that out of 100 jobs, 58 will be created by a public or parapublic administrative body and 20 will come from the private service-related activities such as trade and lodging. However, unlike the situation further north, close to a fifth of the Cree workers are employed in secondary activities in areas such as construction, communications and transportation.

Youth and the job market

Whether it be for the Inuit, the Crees or the Jamesians, the massive arrival of young people on the job market each year contributes to exacerbating the problems resulting from the lack of jobs. In Native communities, the difficulty young people have in finding jobs is too often the source of social distress and tensions. For the Jamesians, the lack of new jobs remains one of the major reasons for leaving the region.

2.1.3 Health Care, Social Services and Housing

Partners in providing services The implementation of quality health care and social services in the Nord-du-Québec region is one of the true achievements of the past 25 years, no doubt mostly attributable, for the Crees and the Inuit, to the signing of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. The partnerships forged among the government, the Inuit and Cree Nations and the Jamesians, have made it possible to develop a northern model that is adapted to the needs of communities. Goodwill and open-mindedness with regard to solutions to problems remain the principal characteristics of the relations that the government has with the Nord-du-Québec population in the area of health care and social services.

Problems common to the entire Nord-du-Québec region The three health agencies in the Nord-du-Québec region share numerous common problems, which constantly require new development or new joint efforts with the government. Geographical considerations, such as remoteness and isolation, are decisive for the organization and cost of the services provided. The three population groups must constantly make choices in order to optimize services in each community and maintain the broadest, most accessible general and specialized frontline services possible throughout the territory. However, the problem of costs remains one of the central issues in developing and delivering health care and social services in the Nord-du-Québec region.

Acute social problems In many instances, social problems in the Nord-du-Québec region warrant specific action requiring partnerships between the communities themselves and with the Québec government. Heading the list of these problems is youth suicide. In some communities, the suicide rate is several times that of Québec. Drug and alcohol abuse, too often leading to violence toward women, children and the elderly, are among the issues that social workers face every day.

The government would like to, in partnership with the community and community-based agencies, step up its actions in the area of social services and community health.

Importance of community groups It is necessary here to emphasize the importance and contribution of community-based agencies to populations confronted with particularly pressing problems such as spousal abuse, alcoholism and drug addiction, as well as mental health problems. These agencies also intervene when groups such as women and youth are experiencing tough times.

Housing shortage for the Inuit and the Crees Finally, it is important to call attention to the housing shortage, which is a major problem for Native communities. The housing issue, which is under the federal government's jurisdiction, is one of the foremost concerns of Native leaders and social workers involved in these communities. The problem of housing cannot be dissociated with that of the social health of the region's Native communities. The relationship between the problems of violence, sexual abuse, withdrawal and learning difficulties and the cramped living conditions imposed on families is now widely recognized.

2.1.4 Culture and Regional Intercultural Exchanges

Nord-du-Québec's exceptional cultural diversity

The Nord-du-Québec region is home to an exceptionally diverse and rich culture. But while the resident Native and non-Native populations have highly differing cultures, languages and history, they also share the fact that they have each in their own way adapted to life in the North. Each group adopts the necessary means to preserve, develop and promote its own distinct culture. The Avataq Cultural Institute directs archaeological work and sees to the preservation of the Inuit language. It publishes its research findings with a constant concern for quality. The Cree Nation has undertaken discussions to create its own cultural institute of unprecedented scope, while the Jamesian population has created a culture and communications committee, which is tied to the James Bay Regional Development Council and is responsible for the James Bay plan of action on culture.

In 1996, the Cree and Inuktitut languages were two of the three Native languages considered safe from the threat of extinction in the long term, out of the 50 native languages counted in Canada. The Crees and the Inuit use English as a second language and young people are speaking French in increasing numbers. As for the Jamesians, 96% of them consider French as their mother tongue.

Little interaction among the three population groups

Each group has shown strong internal ties supported by their political and administrative institutions. This phenomenon makes the Inuit, Cree and Jamesian populations rally and mobilize around their own collective issues. However, exchanges among the different groups, in any structured way, remain limited.

Recent initiatives bring the Crees and Jamesians closer together

On a regional level, the population groups have no regular contact with one another. There are no social, cultural or sporting events that enable the three groups to get together. However, recent initiatives have made it possible for Cree Nation members and Jamesians to rub shoulders at four events: the Gala d'excellence du Nord-du-Québec, the Festival culturel Nord-du-Québec, the Friendship golf tournament and a summer cultural festival. Other attempts have been made to bring the groups together but have not always met with success. It is fair to state, without fear of prejudice, that in the Nord-du-Québec region, the groups, and population they comprise, know each other either very little or not at all.

2.2

Natural Resources

2.2.1 Forests

The importance of woodlands in the Nord-du-Québec region

Even though the forest's economic line is drawn at the 52th parallel, the Nord-du-Québec region still holds 16% of Québec's woodlands. This ranks the region second in terms of harvest areas, after the Côte-Nord region. In 1996-1997, close to 20% of the volumes harvested in Québec came from the Nord-du-Québec region, placing it second right after the Saguenay – Lac-Saint-Jean region. It should be noted that more than half the regional harvest is composed of mature and overmature trees that are over 90 years old.

Large companies share the resource

Large companies account for more than 70% of the harvest. Five sawmills, two of which are high-tech, and one paper mill constitute the region's main industrial infrastructure. Another sawmill, resulting from a partnership between the Cree community of Waswanipi and Domtar, rounds off the industrial portrait of the region. There are very few secondary processing activities in the region.

Forestry, development potential for the Crees

There are five Cree communities on the forest land considered as having merchantable species. They are the Mistissini, Oujé-Bougoumou, Waswanipi, Waskaganish and Nemaska communities. The newly built sawmill in Waswanipi could stir up community interest in developing forest-related activities.

However, there is a divergence in the positions on logging respectively defended by the Québec government and Cree authorities. As a result, in July 1998, the Grand Council of the Crees initiated legal proceedings against the Québec government, the Canadian government and 27 forest companies. The bone of contention is the application of environmental and social assessment processes to forestry operations. Negotiations have been underway since 1999 to try and find ways to bring the parties closer together.

Productivity that could be improved

It would be possible to significantly increase yields from the different species if silviculture work were stepped up. The ten-year inventory that Forêt Québec will produce in coming years will make it possible to learn considerably more about the forests in the Nord-du-Québec region. A better understanding of these forests by universities and research centres should eventually lead to the development of true northern forestry practices.

2.2.2 Mines

A major part of Québec's potential

In the Nord-du-Québec region, the mining of gold, copper, nickel and silver accounted for 20% of the total mineral resources extracted in Québec during 2000. In addition, \$275 million in mining investments were poured into the region during the same year, resulting in 1873 direct mining jobs. To date, only a small portion of land located between Matagami and Chibougamau has been part of sustained exploratory programs over the past 20 years. Yet, the mineral potential of the Nord-du-Québec region is quite significant as can be seen by the startup of commercial production in 1997 of the Troilus (James Bay) and Raglan (Nunavik) mines.

Under-exploited mining resources

In the mining sector, exploration remains the mainstay of power. In this respect, the region as a whole has not been able to fully benefit from the successive waves of mining exploration spurred on by the flow-through financing of the 1980s. The absence of regional mining promoters has also had a negative effect on this sector of activity. This has resulted in the region's mining potential being under-exploited despite the efforts deployed by public bodies and private business to bolster exploration.

To offset this situation, the Ministère des Ressources naturelles (mining sector) launched the Moyen-Nord and Grand-Nord projects in the 1990s. This has made it possible to gain considerably more geoscientific knowledge about the area above the 50th parallel, which is a little-known sector in Québec's north. During the course of these projects, a number of new indicators suggesting the presence of nickel, diamonds and gold were discovered in previously unexplored sectors.

The recent and growing awareness of the mineral potential in the Nord-du-Québec region is more than apparent in that, in 1997 and 1998, this region accounted for 40% of the money spent on exploration and development activities for all of Québec. Furthermore, this percentage even reached 50% in 1999.

In recent years, the mining sector worldwide has seen an overall drop in exploration-related investments, caused by lower investor confidence levels, lower prices for precious and base metals and fiercer competition from new producers in developing countries. As a result, the amount of money spent in the world by private companies on mining exploration dropped some 45% between 1997 and 1999. Québec was relatively unscathed by this recent downturn; its exploration and development expenses fell 30% between 1997 and 1999. The mining industry's keen interest in the Nord-du-Québec region is easy to see since this drop was less drastic and reached only 10% in the same period.

Mining developments negotiated with the Crees and the Inuit

The First Nations are showing increased interest in this sector of activity. Recently, Falconbridge and the Inuit concluded a major agreement regarding the startup of operations for the Raglan mine (a project worth a half billion dollars over 25 years). An agreement was also reached between the Inmet company and the Cree community of Mistissini. There are also active mining exploration companies that are owned by Native peoples. These agreements, in addition to providing jobs in one or another of these communities, show that development in the mining sector can be done while respecting the concerns and way of life of the communities living on the James Bay territory.

Enhancing sustained involvement by Jamesians

In the case of the Jamesians, the government would like to explore avenues likely to enhance their involvement in developing the mining industry on the James Bay territory.

2.2.3 Water

Phenomenal water resources

The Caniapiscau, Rupert, aux Mélézes, aux Feuilles, Grande Rivière de la Baleine, à la Baleine and George rivers are the main watercourses in the Nord-du-Québec region. All have a drainage basins exceeding 26,000 km² and are among the largest in Québec. There are 296 dams and dikes, 294 of which are used by Hydro-Québec and hold water for hydroelectric purposes.

Developing the region's hydroelectric capacity

The development of hydroelectric power is a valuable activity for the region. Hydro-Québec has invested \$20.7 billion to produce more than half of Québec's electricity. In 1999, some 827 jobs were directly related to power generating and transportation facilities. It should be mentioned that the energy sector, with Hydro-Québec's massive presence, is a source of employment and business opportunities that, up to now, has not benefited the region's inhabitants nearly enough.

Openness to new sources of energy

It should also be noted that there is an untapped supply of new energy sources in the Nord-du-Québec region, which need to be assessed and developed. These sources include the highest tidal waters in the world in the Ungava Bay, fossil biomass in the form of peat, especially abundant in the southern part of the James Bay territory, wind energy whose potential is very high, and the fresh water bodies that are among the largest reserves in the world. The Nord-du-Québec Region Development Policy can be the starting point of an in-depth look into these other energy sources.

2.2.4 Wildlife

Importance of caribou for the Native peoples	In the North, hunting, fishing and trapping are subsistence activities relating to the traditional Amerindian way of life. The region is home to, among other things, the largest caribou herd in the world. The caribou population, which includes the Rivière aux Feuilles, Rivière George, Monts Torngat herds as well as woodland caribou, is essential in the Naskapi and Inuit diet. In recent years, these Native communities have been working at commercializing caribou meat. Hunting, fishing and trapping are also widely practised by Cree communities.
The need to ensure sustainability of wildlife species in the North	The growth of Native populations and the constant development of new forms of social and economic activities are all the more reason to ensure the sustainability of wildlife species. This situation is especially true in the case of the caribou, where the herd's health is currently cause for concern due to the wide proliferation of the species and the scarcity of food. Generally speaking, wildlife in the North is often vulnerable.
Outfitters: a growing industry	The number of hunters and fishers in the region virtually doubled between 1991 and 1997, going from 9,000 to 17,700. There are 88 outfitters in the region. Ownership of these outfitting operations is evenly divided between Native peoples and non-Natives. In 1997, these outfitters generated business worth \$22 million, representing 25% of the total income of this type of activity in Québec. Caribou hunting was the most sought after activity with 66% of the hunting clientele.

2.2.5 Parks and Protected Areas

Nature's heritage	The Nord-du-Québec region is synonymous with wide-open and unspoiled areas. Its landscapes are magnificent and diverse. This region is also home to half of Québec's natural areas, which constitute the basis on which the Québec park system is established.
18 projected parks	To be able to protect and develop these exceptional landscapes, the Québec government has set aside 18 areas that will serve to create parks, and which cover an area of close to 50,000 km ² . Twelve park projects north of the 55 th parallel, in Nunavik, are included in the master plan for land management in the Kativik region. These projects involve the land used either by the Inuit or the Naskapi.
A first northern park	A first park project, that of the Pingualuit, has successfully passed the public hearing stage. Nine other projects are slated to be documented over the next four years.
Delegating the management and development of parks	The Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec is currently negotiating an agreement with the Inuit community for it to be responsible for the management and development activities of the Pingualuit park. Later on, a blanket agreement will be negotiated for all parks located in Nunavik. These measures will undoubtedly have an impact on job creation and on regional economic spin-offs. The parks, for the most part located close to the small communities, will provide both structure and stable, long-term employment.
Strong potential for ecotourism development	The creation of parks could provide the impetus for developing ecotourism activities and private services, complementary to the parks, that are likely to interest visitors, making them stay longer and as a result increasing the local and regional economic spin-offs even more. As for the eight park projects planned for the region, preliminary contacts have been established with the communities concerned.

2.3 Other Resources Worth Developing

2.3.1 Tourism

Exceptional potential although demanding to develop

Among the region's many resources are its exceptional tourism opportunities. However, before this potential can be fully tapped, a number of substantial barriers need to be overcome: difficult communications, high transportation costs and sometimes inadequate facilities. The tourist industry in the Nord-du-Québec region is just beginning to tap into a number of new tourism niches, including snowmobile expeditions, adventure tourism, ecotourism and cultural and business tourism.

In 1997, Tourisme Québec recognized Nord-du-Québec as Québec's nineteenth tourist region and created the Association touristique régionale (ATR) du Nord-du-Québec. In the image of its territory, the ATR du Nord-du-Québec comprises three independent entities: the Nunavik Tourist Association, Tourisme Baie-James and the Cree Tourism and Outfitting Association.

The need to forge intraregional partnerships

Each of the region's groups is making an effort toward developing tourism. All those involved agree however that funding is the essential ingredient in light of the overwhelming challenge involved in developing and promoting tourism in a region like the Nord-du-Québec. In this sector, as in others, the groups are increasingly realizing the need to forge partnerships to successfully meet this challenge.

2.3.2 Northern Agriculture

A certain potential for agricultural activities

It is understandable that the region does not do particularly well in the area of agriculture, except in those communities located in the southernmost part of the region, namely Villebois, Val-Paradis and Beaucanton.

Experiments in various parts of the region have nevertheless revealed a potential for growing tubers and small fruits, especially blueberries. The use of abandoned mines for specialized crops is also being considered. The production and marketing of herbal teas in Puvirnituq are also shining examples of creativity and initiative in terms of local northern products.

Local products

Local produce and agriculture offer a potential for economic activity and job creation, somewhat limited perhaps, but nonetheless real. In the North, every job created counts.

2.3.3 Information Technologies and Communications

Telecommunication facilities	In this age of new information and communication technologies, the Nord-du-Québec region finds itself lagging behind in terms of telecommunication facilities and public service providers. A survey conducted by the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, in December 1998, showed that only 36% of the establishments in Cree and Jamesian school boards had access to high-speed networks. Certain technologies and applications that are now part of daily life for companies and individuals living further south are simply not available in the region. The Internet, videoconferencing and telemedicine are only in their infancy on the James Bay territory. The situation is even more critical in Nunavik where all communications are via satellite.
Support community media	Community-based news media are very important to both the Inuit and the Crees. Considerable effort has been put forth by various levels of government and by regional stakeholders to provide Native communities with adequate and effective community media that broadcast in their own language. The high recurrent costs of these services nevertheless limit their development. The introduction of communication technologies and the establishment of community radio and television networks remain however two initiatives sought by northern communities.
Few print media in the James Bay region	The Jamesian population has a local weekly plus a regional paper. There is no daily newspaper. While a few of the major national dailies are available in the region, they arrive at least a half a day late. There are also a few community radio and television stations, but they are not part of a network. The national networks are available with cable or satellite dishes.

2.3.4 Transportation

Transportation: a key factor in the development and quality of life	Transportation remains one of the areas with the greatest impact on the development of the Nord-du-Québec region. Needs in terms of mobility of people and goods are diverse and must take into account the fact that the populations of the Nord-du-Québec region share important and strategic mobility zones with the rest of Québec and with other northern regions (Nunavut, Northern Ontario, Greenland). In short, the improvement of transportation services and infrastructure has always been at the heart of the concerns of the region's communities. Transportation costs and even local supply costs are major stumbling blocks to the region's development. Efficient services and safe transportation are indisputable concerns for the various communities.
Developing the maritime potential	The maritime infrastructure serving the territory is very modest. Transportation by water is only possible four or five months of the year, via ports along the St. Lawrence River or Moosonee in Ontario. This enables the Cree and Inuit communities living in coastal areas to be supplied with goods or petroleum products. The feasibility study for building a deep-water port on the shores of James Bay is currently underway. Modernization of the maritime infrastructure is one of the priorities of Nunavik villages.

Road network	The regional road network covers over 3000 kilometres, not including forest roads. However, this network is limited to the James Bay territory. Several projects are underway or under study so that access to Cree and Jamesian communities continues to improve.
Protecting existing railroads	Rail transportation, available in the southern part of the region, has been rationalized, resulting in the abandonment and dismantling of the Franquet-Chapais line, known for its rich mineral deposits. The loss of this line risks compromising developers' interest in mining the area. Moreover, the changing volumes of rail freight brought on by economic fluctuations has caused some people to worry that the region's railroads may eventually disappear from the regional map.
Air transportation: a necessity in Nunavik	Flying is often the only means of travel, both within the region and outside it. In Nunavik especially, travel is synonymous with flying. However, air transportation is extremely costly and it is often easier to get connections outside the region than within it. Lastly, the fact that there are no roads connecting Nunavik's different localities with the rest of Québec represents a hurdle to development and is one of the most important reasons why the cost of living is so high in this part of the territory.
Transportation plan of the Nord-du-Québec region	The Ministère des Transports, in partnership with government authorities and regional stakeholders from the three population groups, undertook, in 1999, the elaboration of a transportation plan for the Nord-du-Québec region. Representatives from the three groups sit on both the steering committee and the advisory committees set up in the framework of this project. An invaluable planning tool, based on a global portrait of current and future transportation conditions, the plan aims at establishing, over a fifteen-year period, the priorities for action. For the Nord-du-Québec region, an endeavour of such scope represents a first.

SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT:
COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT
AND GOVERNMENT ACTION



Chapter 3

The challenges of development Twenty-five years after the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement was signed, the time has come to take stock of the achievements of recent years and to look at the challenges ahead for the social and economic development of the Nord-du-Québec region.

The type of entrepreneurship seen in the Nord-du-Québec region varies from one group to the next and can be either cooperative, collective or private-sector based. In all cases, however, there are vibrant communities where people's entrepreneurial ambitions are strong.

3.1 Dynamic Development Bodies

3.1.1 The Inuit Nation

The Makivik Corporation

In Nunavik, the Makivik Corporation is a leading partner in development. A business-based manager of the compensation paid under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement, the Makivik Corporation is especially active in the fields of air transportation, fisheries, the marketing of caribou, and the research and development pertaining to the processing of northern products. Recently, the Makivik Corporation concluded partnership agreements with government and private enterprise in the areas of housing construction and marine transportation (freight shipped by water to the North).

The Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec

The Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec is another leading business-based body. It is especially active in the fields of retail sales, the resale of petroleum products, lodging facilities and the marketing of Inuit art.

Development bodies

The Kativik Regional Government (KRG), a non-ethnic municipal structure, the Kativik Regional Development Council (KRDC), the Kativik Local Development Centre (KLDC) and, more recently, the Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau (KMHB) make up Nunavik's organizational structure. These bodies offer the Inuit population all services generally associated with the social and economic development of any of Québec's communities. It can be noted that Québec government signed, in 1997, a framework agreement with the KRDC.

An original partnership with the KRG and the Makivik Corporation

In recent years, those responsible for Nunavik's development have concluded numerous administrative agreements with the Canadian and Québec governments to take over the management of most of the programs involving employment, training and economic and social development. The most recent of these agreements, signed in September 2000, mandated the Makivik Corporation to build some 400 houses, and the KMHB to manage the budgets required to run Nunavik's entire social housing system. Another recent agreement granted the Kativik Regional Government the right to manage its portion of the Fonds de développement pour les autochtones du Québec (Native development fund).

Finally, it is worth mentioning the growing openness of Nunavik's Inuit to partnerships outside Québec. This openness is reflected in the partnerships with the Inuit of Nunavut and of Greenland. The village of Kuujuaq will host the Inuit Circumpolar Conference in 2002.

3.1.2 The Cree Nation

A Cree economy based on a business network

For the past 25 years, the Cree Nation has been building a solid network of businesses whose initial capital was drawn partly from the compensation paid under the JBNQA and managed by the Cree Board of Compensation. A number of carriers, such as Air Creebec, Kepa Transport, Waasheshkun Airways and Air Wemindji, operate within and well beyond the region. Companies in the retail and tourism business are found in most Cree communities. Crees also own the Cree Development and Construction Corporation and Cree Energy, which distributes petroleum products. Several of these regional public corporations come under the Cree Regional Economic Enterprises Company (Creeco).

The Cree Regional Authority (CRA), which acts as a regional development council for the Crees, has an economic development office, which works in network with the local economic development organizations in the nine Cree communities. The James Bay Native Development Corporation and the James Bay Eeyou Corporation are bodies provided for under the JBNQA, whose role is, at least in part, to support the economic development of the Crees, especially through the creation, consolidation or expansion of businesses.

3.1.3 The Jamesians

The James Bay Development Corporation

The mission of the James Bay Development Corporation (JBDC) is to foster, in a perspective of sustainable development, the economic viability, development and use of natural resources other than hydroelectric resources on the James Bay territory. Its turnover is close to \$20 million annually. The SDBJ recently set up a venture capital investment fund. This fund, to which the Québec government intends to progressively invest up to \$40 million, will make it possible for the SDBJ to participate in economic development projects in partnership with the private sector.

Conclusion of a general development agreement with the Québec government

For Jamesians, there is the Conseil régional de développement de la Baie James (CRDBJ), the James Bay Local Development Centre (JBLDC) and the local development organizations that have sprung up among the region's municipalities. The CRDBJ signed a general development agreement with the Québec government in September 1977.

Development of entrepreneurship makes headway among Jamesians

Entrepreneurship is gradually making headway among Jamesians. In the area of social development particularly, business ventures have provided individuals and groups with higher standards of living that would otherwise not be possible. Economic entrepreneurship is something also seen. There are strong aspirations among the various communities to see community-building and job-creating projects come to term. Such aspirations need only to be encouraged and supported.

3.2 Government Action

3.2.1 Service Delivery

Agreements with the Crees and Inuit

Currently, a large portion of services provided to the Cree and the Inuit Nations stems from management agreements entered into by the Québec government and the Canadian government with the Kativik Regional Government and Cree Regional Authority respectively, as provided for under the JBNQA. It is these regional governments that now dispense most government services to their respective populations. In Nunavik, public services are mainly provided through the following institutions: the Kativik School Board, the Nunavik Regional Board, the Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau and the Kativik Regional Government. This last body is responsible for the following sectors: the regional municipal field, the environment, wildlife resources, economic development, labour force training, transportation and police services. This way, the Native peoples of the Nord-du-Québec region are able to adapt services to their needs, often at lower costs than if the services were provided directly by the government.

The major drawback of these agreements is that each one has its own management framework, including a normative framework to establish budgets and define accounting terms and conditions. This entails even more administrative obligations for the Nations concerned. The parties are currently working to improve the effectiveness of these agreements by reducing the amount of administrative they entail. The proceedings of the Nunavik Commission should contribute to better understanding this phenomenon and its consequences on Nunavik.

Jamesians calling for decentralization

The main expectation of Jamesians when it comes to government services concerns the decentralization of ministries toward the region. Currently, the Nord-du-Québec region gets its government services from 43 administrative units in six different regions. The Jamesians made significant headway in the area of health care with the creation, in 1993, of the James Bay Regional Health and Social Services Board. A few years later, in 1997, the Ministère des Régions set up a regional office followed, in 1998, by the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité. This process is slowly continuing with the opening of the regional office of the Société de la Faune et des Parcs. Ensuring a government presence in the region is an issue with multiple implications. Innovative solutions to meet the needs of the populations could be considered.

3.2.2 Economic Development Action

Adapting government measures: a demanding operation

The government measures and programs aimed at supporting development efforts by stakeholders must be adjusted, in most cases, before being implemented in the Nord-du-Québec region. This requires time and the will to do so, as much by government authorities as regional players. Factors such as the time needed to get information out to communities and have it translated are elements that must be considered when implementing programs and measures.

It can be said, however, that once implemented, the programs show good results. Recent examples of this are evident in programs such as the Regional Action Fund, the Business Assistance Fund, the Development Fund for Native Peoples and the funding agreements signed with the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones and with the Cree communities in the framework of the Skills Growth Project Implementation Program of 1998. The Fonds de diversification économique des régions (regional economic diversification fund), announced in the Budget Speech of March 2000, represents another impetus for the region's development.

As for social economy measures, they started being implemented in the region a little over two years ago. They appear to meet the expectations of communities looking for concrete solutions to the problems they experience and who hope to create jobs for the population of the Nord-du-Québec region.

**The Nord-du-Québec
Regional Solidarity
Fund: a good example
of intraregional
cooperation**

The Nord-du-Québec Regional Solidarity Fund, whose implementation was supported by the Québec government, is in its third year of operation. It represents an invaluable tool for cooperation among the region's populations in terms of economic development and job creation. Adjustments to the way it works have had to be made in order to adequately respond to each of the clientele targeted. Slowly but surely, the Nord-du-Québec Regional Solidarity Fund is finding investment opportunities throughout the region.

3.3 The Federal Government's Commitment in the Nord-du-Québec Region

**The federal
government: actively
involved in the Nord-
du-Québec region**

The federal government is very active in Cree and Naskapi communities. These communities come for the most part under federal statutes and programs. As such, the federal government's fields of activity cover almost all public activities: housing, human resources, income security, heritage, infrastructure, transportation, fisheries, regional development, natural resources, the environment, justice.

In Nunavik, a territory essentially under the jurisdiction of Québec ministries and agencies, the federal government is mostly involved through its financial contribution to various fields of activity (education, police services, housing, health care), either under the provisions of the JBNQA or through federal-provincial programs. Other than these financial commitments, the federal government works directly in a few specific areas of Nunavik's development, such as maritime infrastructure and labour force training.

3.4

A Recent Issue: The Identity and National and International Status of the Inhabitants of the Nord-du-Québec Region

Relations among northern countries

The Canadian government announced, in May 2000, the implementation of a northern dimension to Canada's foreign policy that would focus on the themes of prosperity for northerners, Canada's sovereignty in the North, the importance of the circumpolar region as a vibrant geopolitical entity, the safety of northerners and the sustainable development of the Arctic.

The Arctic Council

This new Canadian policy on the international dimension of northern populations follows close on the heels of the creation, in 1996, of the Arctic Council, a body whose eight member countries are Canada, Denmark/Greenland, the United States, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation and Sweden. The Government hopes to work in partnership with Nunavik's population to ensure Québec's contribution and ongoing presence in this network of relationships among northern peoples. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference to be held in Kuujuaq in 2002 marks a step in this direction.

Participation of the region's inhabitants at international events

The establishment of relations both among northerners and with people from outside Québec has never really been an issue. Indeed, the economic, social, ecological and other conditions experienced by the population are, in a number of respects, unique and merit being shared among other peoples or populations living in similar circumstances. This is also true when it comes to symposiums or other scientific events related, for example, to logging of the boreal forest or to mining. Here again, the government could work in partnership with the region's inhabitants where this aspect of their development is concerned.

The Nord-du-Québec region's contribution in implementing the international Convention on Biological Diversity

In addition, the Québec government is responsible, on its territory, for implementing the international Convention on Biological Diversity. To do this, it has given itself new guidelines to establish a strategy aimed at establishing a protected zone of around 8% of its territory by 2005 and at safeguarding its entire biological diversity. The creation of parks in the Nord-du-Québec region will greatly contribute to reaching this objective. It will also contribute to elevating the national and international status of the inhabitants of the Nord-du-Québec region since the protected areas on their territory will have the highest combined acreage in all of Québec.

PRINCIPLES, DIRECTIONS
AND OBJECTIVES OF
THE DEVELOPMENT POLICY



Chapter 4

The principles, directions and objectives proposed by this development policy take into consideration the exceptional situation of populations in the Nord-du-Québec region. The preceding chapters have not only emphasized the unique character of this region but have also elucidated its share of difficulties when it comes to elaborating an integrated development model that respects the values and aspirations of its inhabitants.

4.1 Three Underlying Principles

The complex and often unique realities of the Nord-du-Québec region could justify adopting an array of directions that would make it possible to satisfy the various needs of the population in terms of territorial development. However, through the consultations and analyses undertaken in recent years, three principles seem to particularly meet the aspirations of the territory's inhabitants where the future and development of their communities are concerned. The principles are as follows:

- the development of the North must include a sustainable development approach;
- greater responsibility in the hands of the region's inhabitants toward all aspects of their development will ensure that the needs of the populations are better met;
- the Québec government must recognize and integrate, in its actions and relations with the population, the characteristics of the Nord-du-Québec region and the conditions for its development.

The government subscribes to these action-based principles and has decided to make them the foundation of its first integrated development policy for the Nord-du-Québec region, in conformity with the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. By translating these principles into directions and objectives, the government wishes to mark, in partnership with northerners, a new era in the development of this region. It also seeks to define the Québec government's evolving role and practices.

4.1.1 Development of the North must encompass sustainable development

There is perhaps nowhere more than in the Nord-du-Québec region where development must encompass sustainable qualities. Interest groups, pressure groups and business interests cannot dictate the rules that will define the development of a region like the Nord-du-Québec region. The unique interdependence of physical, social and economic systems call for an ongoing and constructive dialogue among all interested parties. Striking a balance in terms of economic viability, social equity and respect for the environment is indeed a challenge for the years ahead.

The development of the North also calls for the elaboration of a common and widely shared vision as to how the region's vast human and natural potential should be used. Seeking a common understanding of integrated development and the respect for each party's values in this process represent an ambitious political approach. However, for the Québec government, it represents no less than an essential condition for the harmonious development of the Nord-du-Québec region.

4.1.2 Inhabitants must take responsibility for their development

The government acknowledges the aspirations of the Nord-du-Québec region's inhabitants in desiring greater responsibility when it comes to pursuing their economic, social and cultural development. This greater responsibility goes hand in hand with the respect of the characteristics of each group present in the region and is one of the key success factors of this integrated development policy. Assuming greater responsibilities may be done in various ways depending on the different groups and communities - that is only normal. The development policy intends to value and support community initiatives to achieve the Nord-du-Québec region's development potential and offer its residents the best standard of living possible.

To do this, the governmental action on the territory will be based on partnerships built on trust and the common will to develop the Nord-du-Québec region in the best interest of all. Giving greater responsibility to the territory's inhabitants for their economic, social and cultural development and using development tools are two key factors in pursuing a development model for the Nord-du-Québec region and in defining the role that the Québec government intends to play.

4.1.3 The specific northern character must be recognized

Recent decades have made it possible to clarify the expectations of northern populations in terms of their economic, social and cultural well-being. The government has already committed itself to several projects with various communities. The signing of general development agreements is concrete proof. Such agreements have provided the government and the various groups making up the populations of the Nord-du-Québec region with the opportunity of moving closer together. They have also resulted in numerous achievements, the first beneficiaries of which are the communities. Without bringing into question this approach, the relations between the government and the region's inhabitants have reached a crossroads. This development policy is the government's response to its desire to bring it up-to-date, in terms of governance, on the specific character of the Nord-du-Québec region.

This process requires that a climate of trust be built among the Cree, the Inuit, the Jamesians and the government. Furthermore, this climate of trust can only be achieved by reinforcing mutual understandings of development, quality of life and cohabitation in the Nord-du-Québec region and through partnerships that respect the region's values.

4.2 Policy Directions and Objectives

Direction 1

The fostering of partnerships that are pertinent and adapted to the specific character of the Nord-du-Québec region's population

Learning to apply an integrated development model in the Nord-du-Québec region is a relatively new process. The population has already expressed its will to embrace sustainable development principles and elaborate a development model that is resolutely northern. Inuit, Cree and Jamesian youth forums, set up in the region following the Québec Youth Summit, are places where this will has been particularly expressed, and the Québec government reiterates its support in this direction. The same is true for women's groups in the region that have been and continue to be key factors in economic, social and cultural development.

The creation of a sustainable development approach requires, firstly, the building of common understandings among partners concerning the territory's development. Reaching such a shared understanding by everyone presupposes setting down prerequisite conditions. Several of these conditions could be outlined in the three objectives that the government is proposing at this time.

Objective 1 To acquire a common and shared understanding of the history of the Nord-du-Québec region

The history of the region's inhabitants, their way of life and their aspirations remain little known even by the northern communities themselves. This lack of knowledge is prejudicial to mutual understanding and harmonious development. Knowledge of the history of the region's inhabitants represents the prelude to recognizing the characteristics of each and everyone. It also prepares the ground for better relations among the territory's inhabitants. In the same light, northern agreements, which are now an inevitable reality in the region, are also very little known. Northern agreements have made it possible to set up permanent bodies that are involved in environmental and social protection and wildlife management. These bodies have accumulated, since the 1970s, a considerable knowledge base and expertise. The use of such expertise represents a real opportunity for rich and meaningful dialogues among communities.

Objective 2 To lay down the new bases for cooperation among groups

Regional cooperation represents another avenue that could lead to the forging of partnerships in the region. However, wide-ranging regional cooperation raises only the slightest interest in a region like the Nord-du-Québec region. The brief existence of the Northern Québec Regional Council has taught us that regional cooperation must meet four criteria if the region's groups are to successfully work together: it must be voluntary without threatening each party's free will; it must be centred on common issues; it must be capable of proposing solutions; it must have the appropriate means of achieving this cooperation.

Objective 3 To support the creation of partnerships between communities and businesses

The region's businesses, public or private, provide an important anchor for establishing partnerships with neighbouring communities. Examples of such partnerships already exist in the region and must be encouraged since they create jobs for collective groups.

Direction 2

The enhancement of the capacity of Nord-du-Québec communities to assume their development on economic, social and cultural levels

Although the endogenous development of a region like the Nord-du-Québec region is not simple, it does nevertheless have solid assets that will enable it to rise to this challenge. The population's youth and its dynamic character are two of these leading assets. If the region's population is to assume its development, with the aim of generating employment and enhancing the quality of life, it will depend on its capacity and its willingness for entrepreneurship and innovation, and on its acquiring the necessary knowledge and know-how.

Objective 4 To develop the know-how and skills of northern populations, with a priority on youth training

Acquiring know-how, particularly among young people, is a central factor in generating the development of the Nord-du-Québec region. Education underlies development, including its economic, social and cultural dimensions. The relationship between acquiring know-how and regional potential is an essential factor in job creation. Employment opportunities in health, education and administration along with technical and professional jobs must also be targeted.

Objective 5 To value entrepreneurship, particularly in young people and women

Everywhere in the region, young people show a desire to start businesses but remain at the project stage. This is also true of women entrepreneurs. The potential to create small businesses, social economy and cooperative enterprises is very real. This entrepreneurial desire remains a natural resource to be developed in the Nord-du-Québec region. The government intends to prioritize this type of development, in partnership with community officials.

Objective 6 To reinforce the network of partners who strive to create jobs, diversify the economy and improve the quality of life of communities

The government relies on a network of partners in developing and supporting the economy, culture, tourism and recreational activities. Because of the region's geography and demographic characteristics, some of these partners have experienced difficulties in properly assuming the responsibilities that befall them. Nevertheless, these partners are invaluable in providing front-line services in a process where the region is to assume its own development.

Objective 7 To encourage innovation and the use of new technologies

The implementation of new information technologies in the Nord-du-Québec region will open up a host of opportunities in all areas of development. New technologies represent an essential and structuring lever for the region's inhabitants as they begin to assume their own development. Other than the fact that these technologies foster innovation in non-traditional niches, they greatly facilitate the democratic and administrative life of the organizations working in the region.

Direction 3

The integration of the region's specific character at all levels of governmental management

Certain aspects of the Québec government's administration have been adapted remarkably well in the Nord-du-Québec region. This is due to, among other things, the provisions of the JBNQA. A prime example of such adaptation can be seen in the health and social services sector. The present organization of health and social services in the James Bay region was only made possible following legislative amendments. This is but one of the means at the government's disposal to innovate when it comes to delivering services in the North. This policy, advocating integrated development in the Nord-du-Québec region, offers a remarkable opportunity to more fully acknowledge territorial characteristics with regard to Québec's governance, so as to better support the region in its development.

Objective 8 To increase our understanding of the specific character of the Nord-du-Québec region

The Nord-du-Québec region, due to its somewhat complex and often unique characteristics, poses a challenge to whoever attempts to close their eyes to the region's realities. The tools available to the government and the regional stakeholders to assess the impact of problems and to determine the effectiveness of the measures taken are often precarious. Recognizing the region's characteristics means acquiring the tools to better define them.

Objective 9 To innovate where government services are concerned

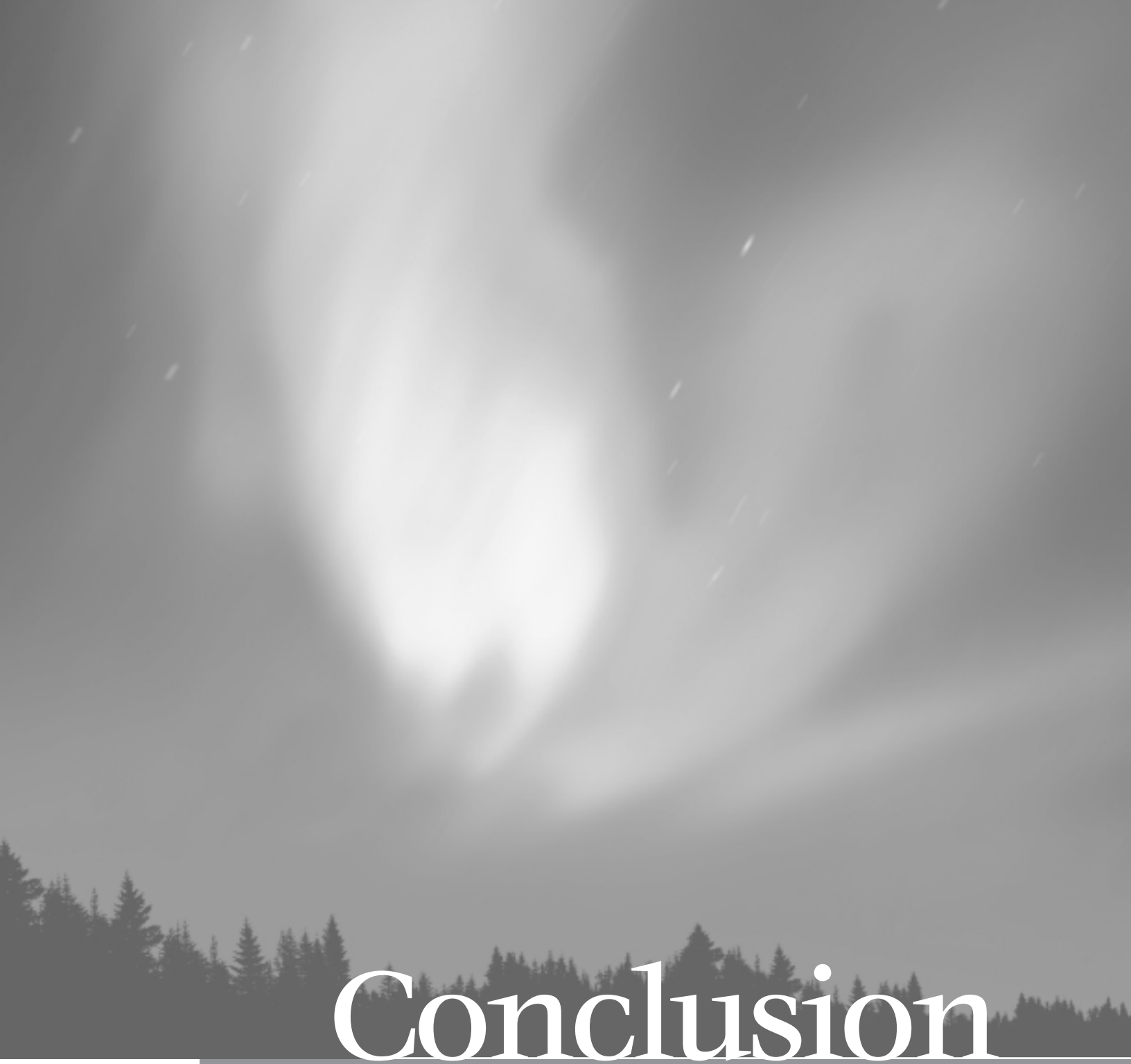
Ensuring quality public services in the Nord-du-Québec region often poses a challenge. Some recent initiatives, particularly in Nunavik, show that it is possible to find ways that optimize the quality of services, while respecting the JBNQA and the qualifications and responsibilities of each player. Although these experiments cannot really be extended to all areas of government services, they can in part meet identified needs. Once again, the establishment of relationships that emphasize cooperation and trust is a key success factor in any innovation to provide government services.

Objective 10 To integrate northern factors into the governmental measures and programs aimed at the region

Numerous government actions reach the region in the form of measures and programs. Adapting these measures and programs to regional needs is sometimes a bit of a challenge. A factor such as northern costs, for example, is not necessarily taken into consideration. This in turn has a direct impact on the action that is planned. Whether it be at the level of municipal infrastructures, economic development or organization of recreational activities, the “northern cost” factor is a component in the funding of most of the activities in the region. It does not affect everyone to the same extent, which is why adjustments are necessary. Other obstacles may also arise along the way to a better adaptation of measures and programs offered to the region. This is the case, for example, of the language of communication used in government documents sent to Native authorities. These documents are not always translated into English, making access to the information they contain difficult for the communities concerned.

Objective 11 To foster the national and international status of the Nord-du-Québec region

The Nord-du-Québec region is an integral part of Québec. However, very few Quebecers are familiar with this region. The region also has another particularity, that of being qualified to participate in the activities of international northern organizations. Québec must claim its place in these activities and rely on the inhabitants of its northernmost part to ensure this participation. Moreover, the Nord-du-Québec region is a shining example of Québec ingeniousness. It is also an exceptional meeting place of cultures, vitality and development whose international renown is as much a source of pride to its population as it is to all of Québec.



Conclusion

Conclusion

Two years have passed since the Committee on Planning and the Public Domain was set up. This committee was responsible for carrying out special hearings on the global study of the development of the Nord-du-Québec region. Two years well spent in terms of observing and analyzing the various regional problems so that a clear diagnosis could be made. Two years also, in which to listen to the concerns and aspirations of the region's inhabitants.

The challenges of drafting an integrated development policy for the Nord-du-Québec region are many, and often complex. This policy must address the aspirations of the region's inhabitants while respecting their rights, commitments and characteristics. It must also formulate proposals that provide the Québec government with the appropriate tools for its involvement on the territory. It is clear that this involvement should fall within available budget margins and any additional financial commitments needed will be established within the government's budgetary process. However, the adoption of a development policy that is specifically geared toward the Nord-du-Québec region means that this region has been recognized as having a special place within the government's action priorities. The Resource Regions Economic Development Strategy, unveiled by the government in the 2001-2002 Budget Speech, already comprises several action-based elements specifically aimed at achieving the economic objectives set out in the Development Policy for the Nord-du-Québec Region. As for other objectives not covered by the Resource Regions Economic Development Strategy, they addressed by the government ministries and agencies in cooperation with the regional communities concerned. In short, we must pursue the development of the Nord-du-Québec region with respect and for the benefit of all.

This is an ambitious process, resolutely multi-sectoral, wide-ranging and based on the ability to reach the broadest possible consensus. This development policy seeks to contribute to the implementation of conditions likely to create jobs. In the Nord-du-Québec region, this objective must be at the top of the regional agenda. To face this challenge, the focus must be on developing the potential of the region and its inhabitants. To be truly productive, this development must be achieved with the same qualities of harmony that this policy is hoping to foster.

The many adjustments having characterized governmental action in the North, particularly over the last 25 years, have made it possible for the government and northern communities to evolve and develop a new and often common understanding of the difficulties at hand and the solutions possible. At this time, the sum of these experiences enables the government to propose a new approach that is respectful of past commitments, specifically tailored to the North and based on the will and the capacity of the communities to assume the development of the Nord-du-Québec region.

This first Development Policy for the Nord-du-Québec Region does not claim to replace what already exists or to provide solutions to all problems. It seeks rather to be a tool for assuming greater responsibility and a series of guidelines for those committed to the future of the Nord-du-Québec region.



This policy is available for consultation
on the Internet at the ministère
des Régions' Website:

<http://www.mreg.gouv.qc.ca>