

Putting an end to all forms of discrimination
DECEMBER 10: INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Montréal, December 9, 2009 – The Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse is pleased to celebrate International Human Rights Day, which this year is focusing on the fight against racism and discrimination.

« International Human Rights Day offers an opportunity to renew our commitment to the protection and defense of all rights and to increase our efforts to combat racism and discrimination in all their forms », today said the President of the Commission, Gaétan Cousineau, on the eve of the 61st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The UDHR, like the *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, states that all individuals have intrinsic rights and freedoms that ensure their protection and full participation in society, and that all are equal in worth and dignity.

However in the current difficult economic context, unemployment and job insecurity can exacerbate the problems facing members of minority or racialized communities, Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, youth and older persons.

The fight against all forms of discrimination is a major concern for the Commission, which launched last September, an important consultation on racial profiling and its impact on youth. Approximately 150 people have agreed to share their racial profiling experiences whether in public spaces or in the school or in the youth protection systems. Drawing upon these submissions and other published research on the topic, a consultation document will be released in early 2010, which will serve as a basis for public forums to be held in the spring.

Moreover, the Commission recently released a report outlining how the homeless in Montreal are victims of social profiling. Meetings with municipal and provincial elected officials will be held this winter to identify solutions in order to eliminate these discriminatory practices and policies that target street people.

“It is urgent to work together, to unite our efforts and to appeal for greater solidarity. As we celebrate the 61 years of the UDHR, we also pay homage to the women and men, who each day, step by step, contribute to the advancement of human rights. We know there is still much to do, and the Commission will continue to defend fundamental rights in order to fight against poverty, exclusion and discrimination”, Mr. Cousineau said.

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