

PRESS RELEASE  
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## **The Common Front tables its counter-offer with the Conseil du trésor**

Montréal, November 18, 2015 – Less than two weeks after receiving a new offer from the government, the Common Front today presented its counter-offer with a view to reaching a satisfactory agreement for the 400 000 members it represents.

“We have preserved the objectives that we have put forward since the start of negotiations: stop the impoverishment of public-sector workers and eliminate the wage gap with regard to other employees in Québec,” said Louise Chabot, spokesperson for the SISP. “That said, we have agreed that the gap can be closed beyond the framework of a three-year agreement. Our demand revolves around the following: indexation of salaries based on the Consumer Price Index, minimally 1%, in order to combat the impoverishment of public-sector workers, a 1% annual catch-up increase until our global remuneration gap is eliminated and 0.5% per year to benefit from collective enrichment if GDP growth exceeds 1%. Currently, based on data confirmed by Statistics Canada—an inflation rate of 1.4 % and GDP growth of 1.5% —we can say that for 2015, the increase would be 2.9%.”

“Unlike the government, we are not simply shifting our figures around from year to year,” emphasized Daniel Boyer, President of the FTQ. “This is a significant gesture toward moving negotiations forward and reaching a satisfactory agreement for our members. Yesterday, Martin Coiteux indicated that he did not wish to impoverish public-sector employees. Our proposal moves in the right direction: indexation of wages based on the cost-of-living increase. And as we have demonstrated, the government’s financial framework is more than adequate to allow us to meet these goals without plunging Québec back into deficit, or raising taxes, but simply by reallocating a portion of the budgetary surpluses elsewhere than to the Generations Fund.”

The Common Front today indicated that it would pursue discussion of pay relativity with the government, while recalling the conditions it had set at outset of this exercise: the process must be detached from a wage freeze and must not result in lowering salaries for public-sector employees. The Common Front will also resume work on the pension plan by proposing incentive measures designed to retain expertise in the public networks instead of the punitive, coercive measures that the government has advocated.

### **Postponement of strike days**

“In order to allow negotiations to run their course, we have decided to postpone the strike action scheduled for December 1, 2 and 3 December,” said Francine Lévesque, Vice President of the CSN. “This does not mean that we are cancelling this action, but that it allows the government to seize the opportunity we are offering today. Martin Coiteux has to understand the message: the members of the Common Front are determined to improve their working conditions and access to the public services for all Quebecers. The

postponement of our strike action could prove to be of short duration if the government shows no significant movement at the bargaining tables.”

**About us**

The Common Front unites the Secrétariat intersyndical des services publics (SISP, consisting of the CSQ, the SFPQ and the APTS), the Confédération des Unions nationales (CSN) and the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ). Together, these organizations represent more than 400,000 employees working in the health and social services, education, postsecondary education and public service networks of Québec. The public-sector collective agreements expired on March 31, 2015.

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SOURCE: CSN, FTQ, SISP

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