Mandate of the Expert Committee on Guaranteed Minimum Income

Background
Economic, social and demographic changes have an impact on the labour market. In response to these changes, and in keeping with the goal of enabling as many as possible to access the labour market, the Gouvernement du Québec has decided to assess the mechanisms involved in the principle of a guaranteed minimum income, as a potential avenue for Québec society in the 21st century.

To define a new model, the Gouvernement du Québec will examine ways in which the various transfers to Québec individuals and families could be simplified and made more transparent, with less administrative burden. To that end, the Minister of Employment and Social Security and the Minister of Finance have created an Expert Committee to perform an initial assessment.

The Committee will explore new approaches through which to fight poverty more effectively, promote social inclusion and move toward introducing a guaranteed minimum income.

Principal Mandate of the Expert Committee on Guaranteed Minimum Income
The principal mandate of the Expert Committee on Guaranteed Minimum Income is to make recommendations to the Minister of Employment and Social Security and the Minister of Finance on matters pertaining to income support.

More precisely, the Expert Committee has been mandated to:

- Document and analyze the features and functioning of Québec’s existing income-support system
- Identify, document and analyze concrete initiatives related to the development of income support, through a review of the international literature
- Provide a diagnosis of the functioning of Québec’s existing income-support system
- Identify, document and evaluate options for improving Québec’s income-support system. For each option, taking into account the specific context and realities of Québec, the Expert Committee will:
  - analyze its effects (e.g. on citizen behaviour, wealth redistribution, financial repercussions)
  - assess its feasibility
  - determine how it would be set up and the conditions for implementing it
  - identify issues
- Make recommendations for improving Québec’s income-support system with a view to introducing a guaranteed minimum income

Elements for Consideration
In performing its mandate, the Expert Committee will take into account:

- The legislative and regulatory framework
- The shared responsibility for income support (Québec and federal)
- The fiscal environment (Québec and federal)
- Theoretical approaches and concrete experiments carried out in other countries
- The results of existing studies and analyses

Guiding Principles
In performing its mandate, the Expert Committee will take into account the following principles, to guide its work toward updating Québec’s income-support system:

- Maintain or increase the visibility of financial assistance provided to citizens by the government
- Ensure or improve the accessibility of financial assistance
- Simplify procedures for citizens and the administration
- Improve the efficiency of the management of financial assistance
- Promote incentives to work
- Ensure a smooth transition from social assistance to the labour market
- Work within the government’s financial capacity

Documentation of Effects
For each option toward improving Québec’s income-support system, the Expert Committee’s report will provide information such as:

- What households will gain and lose
- The net financial costs (tax revenues less budgetary expenses)
- The additional burden on taxpayers
- Effects on work incentives
- Exit rates from social assistance programs
- Low-income rates
- Effects on labour supply
- Effects on economic activity
- Effects on the public administration

Additionally, for options that would involve financial costs, the Expert Committee will indicate sources of funding.

**Composition of the Expert Committee**

The Committee is composed of three experts named by the Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity. All are researchers from the academic community, with expertise in the area of public policy on income support and a knowledge of the clientele concerned, namely those who have low incomes.

**Functioning of the Expert Committee**

The work of the Expert Committee will be coordinated by the Ministère du Travail, de l’Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale.

The Ministère des Finances and the Ministère du Travail, de l’Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale will assess the impacts of the various analyses or proposals made by the Committee, in particular with regard to:

- Financial balances of the Gouvernement du Québec
- Household disposable income
- How measures would be administered

Meetings of the Committee will take place regularly, on a monthly or bimonthly basis.

**Deliverables**

The Expert Committee will produce the following documents:

- Progress Report
- Final Report

Sources: Ministère du Travail, de l’Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and Ministère des Finances

Date: June 15, 2016