

A Socio-Economic Milestone for Québec: Solidarity Fund QFL Celebrates Its 25th Anniversary

Montréal, June 20, 2008 – One of the most unique and visionary socio-financial innovations in recent decades, created by Louis Laberge and the QFL, the Solidarity Fund QFL (“Fund”) will be celebrating its 25th anniversary on June 23, 2008. The theme of this momentous event is *Envision, Expand, Enrich*.

In the National Assembly 25 years ago, Robert Dean, then parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour and sponsor of the *Act to establish the Fonds de solidarité FTQ*, announced the beginning of a new era for Québec and an unprecedented innovation: the creation of a labour-sponsored fund to further Québec’s economic development. After 25 years, the Solidarity Fund QFL has enriched Quebecers and built an impressive legacy for its 575,000 shareholders saving for their retirement. With over \$7 billion in net assets today, the Fund has grown by leaps and bounds over the years.

Innovation and vision

“A quarter century ago, Louis Laberge, then president of the QFL, and the Government of Québec, demonstrated vision and daring by creating this social and economic financial vehicle. I commend them for this initiative that not only gave rise to a new category of savers and created, maintained or preserved thousands of jobs but that also allowed more than 2,000 Québec businesses to develop and conquer new markets thanks to the Fund’s investments,” said Michel Arsenault, chairman of the Fund’s Board of Directors and president of the QFL.

A sound investment in a new social and economic environment

“The tax credits granted by the governments to our shareholders are a real investment because they recover them in less than three years¹ while allowing hundreds of thousands of workers to build a bigger retirement nest egg. It bears mentioning that both governments continue to show their confidence in us today. The fact is that the Fund’s creation in 1983 helped improve labour relations in Québec. As Louis Laberge said at the time, we had to shift from a culture of confrontation to one of cooperation. In hindsight, the Fund led to new social and economic dynamics between governments, business leaders and workers. We’re proud to have made this daring gamble a success. The Fund is still an innovative and inspirational institution in Québec and for other unions in the world,” continued Michel Arsenault.

The Fund’s maturity and expertise in venture and development capital

“A 25-year-old has reached maturity but still has a bright future. At 25, we’re full of dreams and ideas as well as the energy to transform them into reality. And that’s precisely how we ensure the Fund’s success. Our organization has played a key role in building wealth among Quebecers and growing businesses across Québec in such traditional sectors as manufacturing and at all stages of their development. The Fund has also helped create a healthy venture capital industry and attract foreign capital to Québec, with the result that new economy companies have picked up \$1.8 billion in funding over the last 25 years. Other sectors have also benefited from the patient capital we provide and the expertise of our specialized teams. For example, to date the Fund has invested \$415 million in the financial services sector, \$161 million in aerospace and \$175 million in mining,

for a grand total of \$7.2 billion since its inception in 1983,” said the Fund’s chief executive, Yvon Bolduc.

Encouraging young people to save more and boosting business productivity

“We will continue encouraging young people to save more and companies to upgrade their operations in order to boost productivity and competitiveness, to seize expansion opportunities and to help create quality jobs. We will also help Québec businesses with succession planning, work to keep companies headquartered in Québec and continue offering economic training to workers. There are certainly challenges ahead, particularly for the manufacturing industry, but thanks to the strategic stature we’ve achieved, we are now a vital economic development tool for Québec. It’s up to us and future generations to take full advantage of what the Fund has to offer,” added Mr. Bolduc.

A vital economic tool

The Fund owes its success to the convergence of various socio-economic forces: the presence of the Québec Federation of Labour in all sectors of the economy, the governments’ investment through the tax credits granted to shareholders, the invaluable work of local representatives who promote the Fund in their workplace, the ongoing commitment of the Fund’s employees, and the desire of entrepreneurs to grow their business. After 25 years, the Fund is a success story and major source of pride for all Quebecers.

Visit the Fund’s 25th anniversary site at www.25ansfondsftq.com

¹ *Portrait des investissements du Fonds de solidarité des travailleurs du Québec et analyse de leur impact économique*, compiled by SECOR and Regional Data Corporation, February 2005.

About the Solidarity Fund QFL

With net assets of over \$7.4 billion as at November 30, 2007, the Solidarity Fund QFL is a development capital company that through its RRSP channels the savings of Quebecers into investments in all sectors of the economy to help create and maintain jobs and to further Québec’s economic growth. The Fund is a partner, either directly or through its network members, in 1,696 companies. It currently has more than 575,000 shareholders and has helped, on its own or with other financial partners, to create, maintain and protect over 122,000 jobs. For more information, visit www.fondsftq.com.

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