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Minister Christine St-Pierre unveils the Quebec Charter for a Healthy and Realistic Body Image

Montreal, October 16, 2009 – Ms. Christine St-Pierre, Quebec Minister of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women, with Ms. Esther Bégin and Dr. Howard Steiger, co-chairs of the Body Image Task Force, as well as a number of influential people from the fashion, advertising and media sectors who contributed to the committee's work, was pleased to unveil the Quebec Charter for a healthy and realistic body image—the first of its kind in North America.

“This charter is the result of close collaboration between the fashion, advertising and media industries and the government. Beyond the seven articles that it sets out, the charter's main strength is without a doubt its underlying commitment to action. I am especially pleased considering that the process, which only began a few months ago, was a major challenge and one that the Task Force faced head on,” stated Minister St-Pierre.

Co-chaired by Ms. Esther Bégin, a lawyer by profession as well as a journalist and TV and radio anchor, and Dr. Howard Steiger, an expert in eating disorders and Director of the Eating Disorders Program at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute, the committee of close to thirty members met four times and consulted with fourteen interest groups to develop the charter's content.

Ms. Bégin is particularly proud to have participated in this unique North American initiative, as it will definitely help change perceptions of body diversity in Quebec. “By signing this charter, Quebecers are choosing authenticity over artifice.”

For his part, Dr. Steiger stated that involving key people from the world of fashion, the media, health, education and government in this vast project was a world first, which really opens the door for things to change. “Using this brand new charter, whose goal is to reduce social pressures that encourage body dissatisfaction, I hope that we can create a society that sees variations in body shapes as normal. This could lead to fewer and fewer people suffering from anorexia nervosa and bulimia.”

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The FORMidables fashion show celebrating beauty in all its forms: a first step towards diversity

For the unveiling of the charter, Sensation Mode, in collaboration with SCOOP and SPECS modelling agencies, put on the FORMidables fashion show using models of various sizes to showcase the creations of seven Quebec designers. Recognizing this initiative, Minister St-Pierre said that she hopes other people and organizations can draw inspiration from this event. She noted as well that the charter represents a major first step towards a healthy and realistic view of body shapes throughout Quebec. "The charter shows that beauty in all its forms is valued in the province, and it is now up to all of us to adopt its principles and take action in this direction," Minister St-Pierre concluded.

Enclosed: The Quebec Charter for a Healthy and Realistic Body Image
 A list of the members of the Charter Task Force
 A list of the people and organizations that made the fashion show possible

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