

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE NEWS

The environment has been a matter of key concern to the FNEEQ for many years. In 2008, the federation adopted an Environmental Framework Policy and, in 2011, a Responsible Purchasing Policy—inspired by the one implemented by the CSN—to ensure the procurement of products and services that respect labour conditions and to promote eco-efficient practices.¹ Created at the last FNEEQ Congress, the Environment Committee,² now a separate entity from the Occupational Health and Safety Committee, has met on several occasions to lay the groundwork for an action plan and begin fulfilling its three-year mandate.³



Jean Murdock
Secretary-General and Treasurer

Three major focus areas have been established to guide the committee's work, the first of which is to pursue the environmental protection initiatives already in place, namely by updating the framework policy, and to follow up on the federation's environmental protection actions.

The second focus is to promote and encourage sustainable development⁴ initiatives as part of a long-term approach that takes into account the inextricable nature of the environmental, social and

economic dimensions of development activities. To that end, the committee has been working to develop partnerships with environmental education groups striving to curb the effects of human activity on climate change.

Already, we have succeeded in joining forces with *Arbre-évolution*,⁵ an organization that assists Quebec communities with reforestation projects, to pay the travel expenses of the FNEEQ delegation sent to the World Social Forum in Tunisia, and with *Université du Québec à Chicoutimi's* *Carbone-Boréal*⁶ to cover the transportation costs of all delegates serving on federation bodies.

We have also met with representatives of the *Association québécoise pour la promotion de l'éducation relative à l'environnement* (AQPERE), the Quebec association for the promotion of environmental education, to explore opportunities for future collaboration.

The third and final focus area centres on encouraging the FNEEQ's involvement

in events and political action promoting sustainable development. It goes without saying that this also includes the defence of social rights and the right of communities to be consulted on their future. Our participation in social forums and in the organization of the first Quebec-Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Social Forum, which is expected to take place in 2014, is part and parcel of this mission.

We are currently in the process of compiling a report on the transportation methods used by delegates for the purposes of federation business. The committee has reviewed FNEEQ practices in this regard in order to ensure their compliance with existing policy and hopes to be in a position soon to present an action plan to local affiliated unions in the aim of promoting best practices.

This column will be appearing periodically to keep you up to date on the committee's work as well as to broach some of the more fundamental issues concerning the environment.

¹ According to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), eco-efficiency is achieved through the delivery of competitively priced goods and services that satisfy human needs and bring quality of life while progressively reducing environmental impacts and goods and resource intensity throughout the entire life-cycle. Eco-efficiency involves:

- A reduction in the material intensity of goods or services.
- A reduction in the energy intensity of goods or services.
- Reduced dispersion of toxic materials.
- Improved recyclability.
- Maximum use of renewable resources.
- Greater durability of products.
- Increased service intensity of goods and services.

² Since 2012, the committee has been composed of Agnès Lessard, teacher at *Centre d'études collégiales* in Charlevoix, Yves de Repentigny, teacher at *CEGEP du Vieux Montréal*, Stéphane Fauteux, lecturer at *Université de Montréal*, Ariane Bilodeau, federation employee, and Jean Murdock, Secretary-General, as the elected representative on the committee.

³ Term from 2012 to 2015

⁴ In Quebec, sustainable development is generally accepted as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland Report). Sustainable development is based on a long-term approach which takes into account the inextricable nature of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development activities." Source: Government of Quebec, Department of Sustainable Development, Environment, Wildlife and Parks.

⁵ <http://www.arbre-evolution.org/>

⁶ http://carboneboreal.uqac.ca/?page_id=12430