

**Monique F. Leroux among leaders from some 30 countries
invited by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel**

Ensuring the full participation of women in politics and economics

Lévis (Qc), September 22, 2015 – “Having participated in the G7 Forum for Dialogue with Women, I am convinced, now more than ever, that cooperative enterprises provide key leverage to increase women’s economic power and give them a stronger voice to better serve their communities, be it in developing or developed countries.”

Desjardins Group Chair of the Board, President and CEO Monique F. Leroux made this observation as she summarized her experience and participation at the G7 Forum for Dialogue with Women, which took place September 16-17, 2015. Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, brought together 62 leaders from 29 countries for the occasion, among which Prime Minister Erna Solberg (Norway), President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Liberia), Mayor Vera Baboun (Bethlehem), Co-CEO Melinda Gates (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), CEO Mary Barra (General Motors), as well as Margaret Chan and Angel Gurría, respectively Director-General of the World Health Organization and Secretary General of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The [Forum’s final Declaration](#) stipulates: “(...) We recognize that countries with increased women’s participation and leadership in the economy, civil society and political parties tend to be more inclusive and democratic. (...) Women’s economic participation and inclusion is essential to strengthen growth and foster the global economy. Fostering women’s economic empowerment will require actions by all relevant actors, including politicians, the business sector, academia and the civil society. (...)”

Ms. Leroux firmly believes that “Desjardins Group has proven, in Canada and the developing countries where [Développement international Desjardins](#) operates, that the cooperative formula can make all the difference for the financial security of women and their communities.”

The four following themes were discussed at the Forum:

1. Women’s political participation
2. Women’s economic empowerment
3. New opportunities for women in a digital world
4. Improving women’s access to healthcare as a key condition

About Desjardins Group

[Desjardins Group](#) is the leading cooperative financial group in Canada and the fifth largest cooperative financial group in the world with assets of close to \$251 billion. It has been rated one of the 50 Best Employers in Canada by Aon Hewitt. To meet the diverse needs of its members and clients, Desjardins offers a full range of products and services to individuals and businesses through its extensive distribution network, online platforms and subsidiaries across Canada. Considered North America's strongest bank according to Bloomberg News, Desjardins has one of the highest capital ratios and [credit ratings](#) in the industry.

- 30 -

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