

Monique F. Leroux at the Canadian Club of Montreal**Canada must be at the forefront of green technologies**

*Greener development will benefit all sectors of Canada's economy
and will create long-term jobs*

Montreal, February 8, 2016 - Addressing members of the Canadian Club of Montreal today, Desjardins Group president, CEO and chair of the board Monique F. Leroux spoke in favour of a green economy. "Canada has already positioned itself at the forefront in areas like free trade and the deficit battle. Why not also focus on the green technology sector?"

Ms. Leroux stated that the world must go green and solutions will be in high demand. The Paris Climate Summit defined the direction and scope of what will be required over the short, medium and long terms. This is why she is convinced that Canada must take a clear position in this crucial global shift and use it as a driver for development.

"Greener growth will benefit all sectors of the Canadian economy and will be a source of long-term jobs in the near future. Major infrastructure investments are needed to stimulate the economy across Canada. Let's take this opportunity to invest in clean technologies. They will help us to consolidate our expertise, help businesses and workers to be more productive, and will benefit future generations."

Ms. Leroux also shared Desjardins Group's initiatives towards sustainable development, including energy efficient loans, green insurance, responsible investing and, through the pension plan, investments in renewable energy assets. "As an organization, we're aiming to decarbonize our investments. We've also set a target to reduce our GHG emissions by 20% by 2020, based on our 2008 levels," she announced.

Ms. Leroux is also a member of a coalition of business leaders, First Nations, unions, young people and environmental leaders promoting [Smart Prosperity](#). The coalition believes that protecting the environment and economic growth are not incompatible. They recently wrote to the Prime Minister of Canada to ask him to take the lead on this ambitious initiative.

The contributions of cooperatives

Recently elected president of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), Ms. Leroux took advantage of her platform to reiterate that the cooperative movement must be a key element in major global strategies.

"I was in Davos in January and it was a great networking opportunity. I hope that in the future, the Alliance will play a more active role by being included in working groups and discussions at the World Economic Forum."

Ms. Leroux reminded the audience that as a world in which we are all facing economic and social challenges, "we are increasingly interdependent. So it is important to work together, at both community and global levels."

It is for this reason that she is certain that the cooperative model is an asset. As for Desjardins, it will continue to play an active role in Quebec and Canada, and in promoting the development of the cooperative model worldwide.

"The International Co-operative Alliance set a goal to make the cooperative business model the one that will achieve the most growth around the world by 2020. This will be my mission for the coming years. It's a way for me, and for all who are part of the cooperative movement, to contribute to building a better world."

About Desjardins Group

[Desjardins Group](#) is the leading cooperative financial group in Canada and the sixth largest cooperative financial group in the world with assets of \$251 billion. It has been rated one of the 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 -

For further information (*media inquiries only*):

André Chapleau

Public Relations

514-281-7229 or 1-866-866-7000, ext. 5557229

media@desjardins.com