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The Minister of Finance Welcomes the Recommendations of the Working Group on Online Gambling

Québec, November 6, 2014 – The Minister of Finance, Carlos Leitão, welcomes the report by the Working Group on Online Gambling.

“I read with great interest the recommendations and solutions proposed by the working group to combat illegal online gambling. These operators circumvent our laws, generally offer no guarantees with respect to responsible gambling and deprive the Québec government of substantial revenue,” emphasized the Minister of Finance.

The working group’s mandate was to analyze the social impact of the development of online gambling and examine regulatory, technical, economic and legal measures to block illegal online gambling. The working group was established in July 2010 by Minister Raymond Bachand.

The chair of the working group, Louise Nadeau, emphasized in the report that none of the concerns expressed by public health officials came to pass following the creation of Loto-Québec’s Espacejeux website. She added that no increase was observed in the number of gamblers, the level of at-risk behaviour or the number of online gambling-related problems. That observation is very important, as it validates the government’s decision to allow secure, responsible online gambling,” said the Minister.

Combating illegal websites

Effectively combating illegal online gambling websites is dependent on adapting the laws in force and implementing a series of complementary measures.

In fact, the working group recommended that an amendment to the *Criminal Code* be considered to allow the implementation of a licensing system that would control the activities of online gambling operators. Minister Leitão sent a letter in that regard to his counterparts in the other provinces and territories to consult them on the subject.

“The working group’s proposal to create a portal for offering private operators’ games is an interesting one. I asked Loto-Québec to evaluate, in the short term, the appropriateness of developing the Espacejeux offering by using that expertise,” remarked the Minister.

Other complementary measures, such as the filtering of illegal websites and the strengthening of prevention and public awareness efforts, will be examined with

interest. The methods proposed by the Working Group on Online Gambling will be examined jointly with the government departments concerned.

The report is available at www.groupes.finances.gouv.qc.ca/jeu/index.asp.

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