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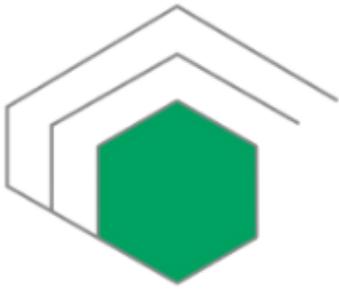
**First Reaction on The Ontario Budget: The CCO
Sees Openings for the Social Enterprise And
Cooperative Sectors**

Toronto - April 11, 2019 – The Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario sees openings for the social enterprise and cooperative sectors in the budget that was presented today by the Minister of Finance Vic Fedeli. The budget generally highlights economic development, but some questions remain unanswered.

The Ontario Open for Business plan takes a whole new dimension with this new budget. We note the creation of an Office of Economic Growth and Innovation, with whom we will collaborate on social finance matters. It is suggested to promote Ontario at the international level and this fits well with our current project to create an incubator/accelerator in Toronto, in partnership with the *Société économique de l'Ontario* and over fifteen other economic partners. This project aims at attracting Francophone businesses from other parts of the world into Ontario and at facilitating the installation and exportation of Canadian businesses into global Francophone markets. One question remains unanswered and that is around the integration of social enterprises and cooperatives in those efforts. We will ensure that these dynamic sectors are fully integrated in the government's strategies.

Looking at the modernization of government services, we support the targets of efficiency. We recognize that since the Fall of 2018, cooperatives are now incorporated through ServiceOntario, a request that we had kept pushing for years. The incorporation process can still be improved but we will work with government around that issue. We also acknowledge that sections of the budget address the modernization of the Cooperative Corporations Act on one hand, and of the Caisses populaires and Credit Unions Act on the other hand. We naturally support this progress as long as it continues to be built around a consultative process. We also expect that the promises made be kept.

Among the sectors that are targeted in the budget, we note that engagements are made around economic development in Northern Ontario – where we have three offices, supporting home care services – that can be delivered at a lower cost by cooperatives and social



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enterprises, promoting financial literacy – something that we strongly defend with our member and partner Desjardins, investing in affordable housing – which can be done through the support of housing co-ops and finally developing transportation systems. We will do our very best to connect those sectors to the development of new and existing cooperatives and social enterprises.

We conclude our analysis with a review of the issues relevant to the Francophone communities. We strongly support the economic mandate that is being conferred to the Ministry of Francophone Affairs as well as the renewal of the Ontario Francophonie Support Program in its new form. We regret nonetheless the decreased budget of that Ministry. We look forward to meeting with Minister Caroline Mulroney very soon to connect her mandate with the numerous social and economic initiatives that we are working on.

“This Ontario Budget sends potentially interesting signals for our sector. We notice that economic development will now be a priority and that’s good news for our social enterprise and cooperative sector. The social enterprise and cooperative economy is for Francophone and Bilingual communities one of the best ways to do business. We are looking forward to working with the Ontario government towards a sustained growth for our communities!”, Julien Geremie, Executive Director of the Conseil de la coopération de l’Ontario.

The CCO will be following the implementation of the budget very closely as well as its impacts on our sector.

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About the Conseil de la coopération de l’Ontario:

The Conseil de la coopération de l’Ontario is the organization of choice for education, promotion, collaboration and advisory services to ensure the sustainable development of French-language and Bilingual cooperatives and social enterprises in Ontario. The CCO has offices in Ottawa, Toronto, Sudbury, Windsor and Temiskaming Shores.

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