# BECOMING A FEMINIST

MALANNI LA SALA

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# Statement of the Conseil des Montréalaises

Concerning the Bilan du plan d'action 2015-2018 Pour une participation égalitaire des femmes et des hommes à la vie de Montréal





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The members of the Conseil des Montréalaises (CM) adopted the statement at its meeting of 13 August 2020 and submitted it to Montréal's City Council.

The CM uses non-sexist language in its communications and research reports. This commitment is a step toward the adoption of language that represents and includes non-binary and trans people.

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## **ABOUT THE CONSEIL DES MONTRÉALAISES**

Created in 2004, the Conseil des Montréalaises (CM) is composed of 15 women volunteers who reflect the diversity of Montréal women. It acts as an advisory body for the municipal government with a focus on the status of women, gender equality, and equality among women. It uses an intersectional feminist approach to analyze the issues facing women in Montréal.

The CM's duties include:

- To provide, on its own initiative, or when requested to do so by the mayor, Executive Committee, or City Council, opinions on any matters concerning gender equality and equality among all women and the status of women, and submit its recommendations to the City Council;
- To solicit opinions, receive and hear requests and suggestions from any person or group on matters relating to equality between women and men, equality among women themselves and the status of women;
- To contribute to the implementation and monitoring of a gender equality policy at the City of Montréal;
- To carry out or commission studies and research that it deems useful or necessary for the performance of its duties.

The CM is a valuable democratic tool. It stays abreast of new ideas and currents of thought and is attentive to the trends and expressions of City residents and local feminist community organizations. Its main focuses are living in the city, governing the city, and working for the City. In sum, the CM devotes its attention to the living conditions of Montréal women (transportation, housing, the fight against poverty, security, homelessness, sports and recreation, etc.), the presence and participation of women in municipal politics, and the working conditions of women civil servants.

### **TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ARTM	Autorité régionale de transport métropolitain
BÉLD	Bureau de l'égalité et de la lutte aux discriminations
CCRE	Conseil des communes et régions d'Europe
CDEC	Corporation de développement économique communautaire
CDPDJ	Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse
CLD	Centre local de développement
CRIAW	Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women
CRDIM	Conseil régional de développement de l'île de Montréal
CRÉ	Conférence régionale des élu.es
EAEP	Equal Access to Employment Program
FFQ	Fédération des femmes du Québec
FQM	Fédération québécoise des municipalités
GBA+	Gender-based analysis plus ["plus" = intersectional]
INM	Institut du Nouveau Monde
IRIS	Institut de recherche et d'informations socioéconomiques
ОСРМ	Office de consultation publique de Montréal
RABQ	Réseau de l'action bénévole du Québec
SDIS	Service de la diversité et de l'inclusion sociale
SHQ	Société d'habitation du Québec
SPVM	Service de police de la Ville de Montréal
STM	Société de transport de Montréal
SUM	Service de l'urbanisme et de la mobilité
TGFM	Table des groupes de femmes de Montréal
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UN	United Nations

# Introduction

### **INTRODUCTION**

The City of Montréal has been committed to implementing measures that promote equality between women and men since 2008. This commitment led to the adoptiona gender equality policy, *Pour une participation égalitaire des femmes et des hommes à la vie de Montréal* [Promoting Equal Participation of Women and Men in the Life of Montréal],<sup>1</sup> which served as the basis for the 2008-2012 and 2015-2018 action plans. As this policy stipulates, the Conseil des Montréalaises (CM) has to follow-up on its implementation.

This statement is a response to the evaluation of 2015-2018 action plan, *Bilan du plan d'action 2015-2018 Pour une participation égalitaire des femmes et des hommes à la vie de Montréal*,<sup>2</sup> published by the City of Montréal in 2019. In it, we present CM's members' main observations and thinking on the achievements of the 2015-2018 action plan. We highlight advances the municipal government has made in recent years and the many ongoing challenges to achieving gender equality and equality among women in Montréal. The crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fact that women are the primary instigators of social and community cohesiveness while also constituting one of the city's most vulnerable populations. It is thus all the more important that the City of Montréal continue its efforts to advance equality in future social development action plans.

In this statement, CM members present the results of our reflections in three sections. The first section provides a critical analysis of the 2015-2018 equality action plan. In the second part, CM members set out our vision for an egalitarian city free of discrimination, based on one main objective, two guiding principles and four conditions for success. We underline the importance of fighting all forms of discrimination and recognizing women as agents of change so that all women in Montréal can enjoy their full rights. To achieve this goal, the City must be responsible and accountable, create a *Bureau de l'égalité et de la lutte contre les descriminations* [Equality and Anti-Discrimination Office], apply gender-based and intersectional analysis (GBA+) in all its decision-making processes, and ensure the CM's sustainability, independence and resources. Finally, the third and final section reports on the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's living conditions in Montréal and presents recommendations concerning women's role in the City's recovery plans.

The CM commends the progress of recent years in furthering equality between women and men and among all women. The recommendations contained in this statement are intended to guide the City in all areas of its jurisdiction and are aligned with the CM's vision for an egalitarian city free of discrimination.

## **1 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE BILAN DU PLAN D'ACTION EN ÉGALITÉ** 2015-2018

This critical analysis of the City of Montréal's *Bilan du plan d'action 2015-2018 Pour une participation égalitaire des femmes et des hommes à la vie de Montréal*<sup>3</sup> (hereafter, *Bilan du plan d'action 2015-2018*) is based on the Conseil des montréalaises' findings and reflections inspired by our previous work, the needs expressed by women and women's groups the CM has met with, and studies conducted in collaboration with various partners. The analysis is presented in sections corresponding to the five action areas reviewed in the *Bilan du plan d'action 2015-2018*.

It is important to mention here that the CM was unable to effectively monitor implementation of the 2015-2018 equality action plan due to the methodological shortcomings of this plan (lack of monitoring and evaluation indicators), the incomplete data presented in the plan, and the limited resources and powers available to us.

This document therefore does not present an exhaustive analysis of the results of the 2015-2018 equality action plan, but rather the main findings and reflections of CM members after reading the City's evaluation of the plan [Bilan du plan d'action en égalité 2015-2018].

#### 1.1 Governance

Municipalities are local governance bodies. They have participation mechanisms that allow them to adapt their public policies to citizens' different needs, realities and interests. By ensuring inclusive citizen participation at all levels of its governance structure, the City of Montréal can contribute to the enrichment of local democratic experiences while playing a leading role in achieving de facto equality.

#### 1.1.1 Progress

The CM welcomes the City's efforts to support women's career advancement, including the prioritization of skills development and implementation of the preferential hiring rate as stipulated in the 2016-2019 employment diversity action plan.<sup>4</sup>

Equal Access to Employment Programs (EAEPs) are programs instituted by the *Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies* and are aimed at countering job discrimination. They are intended for public organizations (municipalities, education, health and social services networks and government corporations), certain private companies and certain government agencies.<sup>5</sup> At the City of Montréal, the Equal Access to Employment Program "proposes a series of measures to promote diversity in its teams and ensures a fair and equitable hiring process for women, Indigenous people, visible and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities."<sup>6</sup> [Translation]

The City has also introduced several beneficial measures to promote women's access to decisionmaking positions, including the creation of seven youth councils with gender parity in City boroughs and the annual Cité Elles MTL simulation-training program for women interested in municipal politics.

Finally, the members of the CM applaud the introduction of training on gender-based and intersectional analysis (GBA+) for elected officials, managers and professionals. CM members are also pleased to note that a pilot project to integrate GBA+ into the City's decision-making processes has been underway since January 2019.

#### 1.1.2 Challenges

#### 1.1.2.1 Promoting women's access to and retention in decision-making bodies

According to the *Bilan du plan d'action en égalité*, between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2018, 336 women were appointed to represent the City on various internal or external bodies (standing committees, Executive Committee, urban planning advisory committees, boards of directors, etc.). Based on these data, available on the City's open data portal,<sup>7</sup> it is not possible to assess whether the goal of "making gender equality in governance the primary objective of the [equality] policy"<sup>8</sup> was met, since they do not mention the proportions of women and men who sit on the City's various decision-making bodies. In addition, only the gender of appointees is listed on the City's open data portal. There is no information on the proportion of women from visible and ethnic minorities, Indigenous women or women with disabilities that would make it possible to measure and then ensure the representativeness of all Montréal women in positions of power.

Concerning elected officials, CM members are pleased to note that parity has been achieved in Montréal: out of 103 candidates elected in the November 5, 2017, municipal election, 53 were women.<sup>9</sup> CM members encourage the City to continue its efforts to maintain parity. They also call on the City to implement measures to achieve parity in all City bodies (internal or external) where City representatives sit and improve working conditions that promote the retention of female elected representatives (pay equity, family-work balance, <sup>10</sup> code of ethics, etc.).

Also, although the City Council has achieved parity, it is still not very representative of the sociodemographic reality of the metropolis. Of the 87 elected officials who responded to the selfidentification form, one person self-identified as a person with a disability, six self-identified as a member of a visible minority group and 14 self-identified as belonging to an ethnic minority.<sup>11</sup> It is important that the City act to counter this under-representation in its decision-making bodies, document the systemic barriers that cause it and develop bold measures to ensure the fair political representation of all Montréalers in positions of power.

Finally, it should be noted that the literature on women in decision-making positions focuses more on the obstacles encountered when women enter politics, with little attention on the challenge of keeping them in office once they are elected. Political culture, which is not very welcoming to women, and the work climate have often been cited as the reason women leave after completing just one term.

In 2017, the Fédération québécoise des municipalités (FQM) conducted a survey of its elected members and found that 30% of them reported that they had been victims of intimidation, harassment or discrimination in the course of their duties.<sup>12</sup> Bullying is one of the most common problems. When asked about discrimination, nearly 20% of elected women (versus 12% of elected men) mentioned that they had experienced such a situation in the past. Among the types of discrimination reported were racist and discriminatory comments, as well as sexist jokes and comments. Discrimination and other types of psychological and physical violence have been identified as one of the problematic situations that can compromise women's access to and retention in politics.

CM members welcomed the new code of ethics and conduct for members of city and borough councils [*Code d'éthique et de conduite des membres du conseil de la Ville et des conseils d'arrondissement*]<sup>13</sup> which states that "members of Council shall promote a harmonious and respectful work climate and a healthy work environment free of harassment." They encourage the City to promote this policy to elected officials and introduce compliance mechanisms. They also endorse the FQM in recommending that the City offer training and awareness-raising workshops on the discrimination experienced by women in municipal politics.<sup>14</sup>

#### 1.1.2.2 Increasing women's civic participation in municipal life

CM members note the lack of concrete measures in the equality plan and the Bilan with respect to a key aspect of local governance, namely citizen participation in the affairs of the City. In 2019, CM members published a brief on women's participation in question period at Montréal City Council meetings.<sup>15</sup> The recommendations were mainly based on the findings of the project *MTElles : pratiques participatives pour l'égalité*,<sup>16</sup> a project on women's civic participation in Montréal's democratic life led by Concertation Montréal, Relais-femmes and the Coalition montréalaise des Tables de quartier, as well as on observations made by Montréal women's groups over the years. All the recommendations stress the importance of better identifying the systemic biases that hinder women's participation in community development and the importance of implementing innovative and inclusive participatory democratic practices to eliminate these obstacles. The CM

commends the proactive approach of the *Bureau de la présidence*, which has already implemented several of the CM's recommendations. However, the equality action plan and the *Bilan du Plan d'égalité 2015-2018* do not propose any concrete measures to document and address the systemic barriers women face when they want to participate in public consultations or in City Council question periods. The CM therefore urges the City to take all women into account when organizing its consultations, both at the central city and borough levels, and to include them in its next policy on public participation and citizen engagement.

#### 1.1.3 The CM's Recommendations Concerning Governance

• **R1** That the City of Montréal ensure that all of its decision-making structures (executive committees, standing committees and chairs of standing committees, urban development advisory committees, and boards of directors of agencies connected with the City) reflect Montréal's sociodemographic reality.

**R1 a.** That the City of Montréal achieve, within five years, a 40% to 60% representation of women (the "parity zone") in its decision-making bodies.

**R1 b.** That the City of Montréal set and achieve, within five years, specific representation targets for ethnic and visible minority women, Indigenous people and people with disabilities in its decision-making bodies.

- **R2** That the City of Montréal annually organize Cité Elles MTL to support women's presence in politics, allocate the necessary resources, and ensure its sustainability from year to year.
- **R3** That the City of Montréal undertake to formalize all the practices supporting family-work balance for elected officials and introduce standardized and transparent practices.
- **R4** That the City of Montréal commit to applying the measures presented in the MTElles (a women's civic participation project) toolkit for equal and inclusive participation for all women.

#### 1.2 The City As an Employer

As the main employer in the metropolitan area, the City of Montréal can play an important role in improving the living conditions of all women in Montréal.

Despite much effort in recent years, CM members observe that systemic inequalities persist in terms of equality and inclusion in employment.

They therefore urge the City to become an exemplary employer and a model of public service by offering the same hiring and promotion opportunities for all women and men.

#### 1.2.1 Progress

CM members applaud the efforts of the human resources department to publish genderdisaggregated data on the five groups targeted by the Equal Access to Employment Program (EAEP) and to implement initiatives to support women's career advancement. They also commend the initiatives aimed at promoting women's access to male-dominated jobs: preferential hiring/ appointment training for recruitment officers, information sessions on blue-collar jobs, diversity management training, partnership with the Concertation montréalaise femmes et emplois majoritairement masculins (CMFEMM), firefighter recruitment program for women, visible and ethnic minorities and Indigenous people.autochtones.

#### 1.2.2 Challenges

#### 1.2.2.1 Adopting an intersectional approach to employment equality

According to the evaluation of the 2015-2018 equality action plan, between 2015 and 2018, the City hired 75 upper-level management employees, 34 of whom were women (45.3%), 549 senior administrative employees of whom 264 were women (48.1%), 795 police officers, of whom 240 were women (30.2%) and 1,276 blue-collar workers, of whom 202 were women (15.8%). Unfortunately, the evaluation does not show the percentages of women in each job category or the changes in these percentages (for example, what are the percentages of female executives in 2015 and 2018) that would make it possible to assess the proportion of women in these jobs and the changes in this proportion.

According to data provided by the human resources department, as of December 2019, women represent 56.50% of white-collar workers, 16.92% of blue-collar workers, 1.33% of firefighters, 33.91% of police officers, 55.74% of general professionals, 41.46% of upper-level management, 46.96% of administrative managers and 27.94% of scientific professionals. Also, among all employees, 38.83% are women and 14.82% are individuals from a visible minority, 6.47% from an ethnic minority, 0.41% from an Indigenous community, and 1.06% are living with a disability.

Considering these data and women's under-representation in certain categories, the CM reiterates the importance of the City taking an intersectional approach to gender equality in its municipal public service, as recommended by experts at the women and the workplace symposium.<sup>17</sup> According to these experts, there are three important elements in advancing gender equality and diversity in the workplace: taking an intersectional approach to equality in the workplace, changing structures rather than people, and raising awareness of gender equality, including challenging common myths about barriers to women's advancement in the labour market (for example, promoting diversity is a challenge to meritocracy, where gendered career gaps are simply the result of personal "choice"). From this, it follows that best practices should focus on the three phases of the employment cycle: hiring, retention and career advancement.

Using an intersectional approach, with differentiated and cross-referenced data, would make it possible to identify job categories where women, women from ethnic and visible minorities, Indigenous women and women with disabilities are barely represented, and then to implement measures to correct the systemic discrimination they experience in hiring, retention and career advancement. Regarding such measures, the CM has already formulated several recommendations concerning the production of gendered data on the implementation of the EAEP for each targeted category;<sup>18</sup> revision of hiring selection tools for blue-collar workers,<sup>19</sup> sensitivity training to counter sexist<sup>20</sup> and ableist<sup>21</sup> prejudice, the establishment of partnerships with specialized organizations,<sup>22</sup> etc.

#### 1.2.2.2 Promoting a balance between personal and professional life

CM members note that no measures to promote family-work balance (FWB) were included in the 2015-2018 equality action plan or in its evaluation. This, despite the fact that "promoting the use of family-work balance measures" is one of the objectives of the City's gender equality policy,<sup>23</sup> and that the CM has repeatedly recommended such measures.<sup>24</sup> Structural measures are now necessary so that all municipal public service employees can benefit from a better FWB. These measures, which include teleworking, are even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which a large number of employees are still teleworking.

#### **1.2.3 The CM's recommendations concerning the City as an employer**

• **R5** That the City of Montréal ensure that the objectives set by the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (CDPDJ) for the five groups targeted under the EAEP are met, in all employment categories, in the central city and in the boroughs.

**R5 a.** That the City of Montréal ensure that the objectives set for women are met and pay special attention to job categories where they are few in number (blue-collar workers, police officers, firefighters, scientific professionals).

**R5 b.** That the City of Montréal ensure that between 40% and 60% (the "parity zone") of Indigenous people, people with disabilities and people from visible and ethnic minorities employed by the City, in all job categories, are women.

**R5 c.** That the City of Montréal ensure that it reaches between 40% and 60% (the "parity zone") of women in its specific programs in the next strategy for diversity, equity and inclusion in employment [*Stratégie pour la diversité, l'équité et l'inclusion en emploi*] (targeting Indigenous employees or individuals, people with disabilities, and people from visible and ethnic minorities).

- **R6** That the City of Montréal develop and adopt an official family-work balance (FWB) policy that applies to all staff in all its departments and boroughs, while taking into account specific job category needs (e.g. blue-collar schedules).
- **R7** That the City of Montréal provide GBA+ training to all human resources staff and that it apply this analysis to its recruitment processes, programs, projects, policies and human resources plans in order to take into account all women with regard to employment.

#### **1.3 Services for Women**

Promoting access to municipal services for all women is an essential aspect of an egalitarian city. The CM urges the City to continue advancing in this area by paying particular attention to increasing services specifically addressed to women

#### 1.3.1 Progress

CM members recognize the many efforts and improvements the City has made in services to women residents. The adoption of a declaration against sexual violence<sup>25</sup> in 2018 and the endorsement of UN Women's "Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces" initiative<sup>26</sup> in 2019 are certainly important symbolic messages regarding women's safety.

Concerning homelessness, the CM applauds the City's 2018-2020 action plan on homelessness, *Parce que la rue a différents visages*,<sup>27</sup> which emerged from a broad consultation of partners and includes several measures specific to women.

Finally, CM members praise the initiatives implemented by various City departments to raise awareness of gender- and intersectional-based needs and the efforts of the housing department to better understand women's needs.

#### 1.3.2 Challenges

#### 1.3.2.1 Ensuring women's safety

CM members reiterate the importance of ensuring genuine security for all women in Montréal in public spaces.<sup>28</sup> "...We must combat sexual assault and harassment and implement security measures. This is the responsibility of all of us, not just women." To act on the declaration against sexual violence adopted in 2018, one of the first steps would be for the City of Montréal to adopt a clear position against all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, as called for by the women's groups who participated in the consultation "Femmes et enjeux municipaux" organized by the CM in collaboration with the Table des groupes de femmes de Montréal (TGFM) in April 2018.

CM members believe that joining UN Women's "Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces" initiative is a good opportunity to learn from best practices at the local, national and international levels with the aim of introducing promising measures that make the metropolis more egalitarian, more inclusive and safer. As a start, the UN Women program is an opportunity to take stock of the current state of violence against women in Montréal. Effective program implementation depends on concerted action with women's groups and the commitment of all municipal partners to program objectives. One such initiative has recently been implemented in Winnipeg.<sup>29</sup> The City's support for this initiative should be used as a lever to mobilize all stakeholders in the fight against violence against women. The CM's statement "Montréal, A Festive City for All" contains a number of recommendations on safety that could provide food for thought on the implementation of the "Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces" program.

Finally, CM members note that the *Guide d'aménagement pour un environnement urbain sécuritaire*<sup>30</sup> has not been updated since the evaluation of the 2015-2018 equality action plan. Considering the fundamental importance of urban planning for women's safety and sense of safety in the city, members urge the administration and its municipal partners to continue the work already underway to follow up on this.

#### 1.3.2.2 Increasing the supply of social, affordable and safe housing

According to the *Bilan du plan d'action en égalité*,<sup>31</sup> municipal action in housing is not specifically aimed at women, but women benefit greatly from it. Several results are mentioned regarding the development of social and community housing, assistance for the purchase of a property, assistance for the home adaptation program, and inspections of unsanitary housing, but the *Bilan du plan d'action en égalité 2015-2018* and the action plan itself do not mention any measurable objectives or take into account women's multiple realities.<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, CM members note that housing is a major issue for Montréal women. As the heads of more than half of all tenant households, women are increasingly at risk of being poorly housed, in particular because of their greater poverty. They are also more likely to experience insecurity in their homes.<sup>33</sup> Indigenous women, women with disabilities, single mothers, immigrant and racialized women, women who are victims of domestic violence, older women, women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and low-income women face significant additional barriers to housing, both in terms of housing opportunities and housing conditions.<sup>34</sup>

They "face implicit or explicit discriminatory treatment when renting or buying. These multiple forms of discrimination mean that they have to turn to housing that is too small for their needs, in poor condition or that is far from the infrastructure, resources and services they need. The discrimination does not end there. Many women report having experienced sexual harassment and assault, and having their bodies treated as merchandise by a landlord, janitor, manager, neighbour or roommate. The difficulty of finding and remaining in safe housing places many women and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness."<sup>35</sup> [Translation]

Women's difficulties in accessing housing are exacerbated in a context where there is a scarcity of rental housing and constantly rising rental and property prices.<sup>36</sup>

However, action can be taken to maintain the rental housing stock, and some boroughs have begun to take steps in this direction. For example, the Sud-Ouest borough adopted a draft bylaw to govern the subdivision and reduction of the number of dwellings, <sup>37</sup> and the borough of Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie has legislated to restrict the establishment of tourist residences on certain streets. <sup>38</sup>

Housing is therefore a major issue for women, and social housing has proven to be a sustainable solution. This type of housing, which is non-profit and not subject to the market logic of profit and speculation, represents a way to meet the specific needs of economically, socially and politically marginalized groups.<sup>39</sup>

In April 2018, representatives of women's groups met with the CM during its "Women and Municipal Issues" [Femmes et enjeux municipaux] consultation day, organized in partnership with the TGFM, and asked the City to increase the supply of social, affordable, decent housing that is accessible by public transit and close to essential services.

Also in 2018, the City of Montréal adopted a strategy for the development of 12,000 social and affordable housing units [*Stratégie de développement de12 000 logements sociaux et abordables 2018-2021*].<sup>40</sup> It has also introduced a new by-law to improve the supply of social, affordable and family housing on its territory: the *Règlement pour une métropole mixte*.<sup>41</sup>

CM members applaud these pivotal City initiatives. We reiterate the importance of increasing the supply of social housing, particularly social and community housing in Montréal, as recommended in our previous statements: *L'itinérance des femmes à Montréal* (2017), *Les femmes au centre de la ville* (2016) and *L'accès au logement pour les femmes de la région métropolitaine* (2014). The effective completion of these social and community housing units is all the more urgent since development of the units already planned "is currently experiencing significant delays: approximately 500 units were delivered in 2017, which is far from the rate of 1,250 per year needed to reach the City of Montréal's target of 12,000."<sup>42</sup> [Translation]

Many women's groups and advocacy organizations attending consultations held by the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM) reiterated the importance of increasing the supply of social housing in Montréal and raising the social housing threshold in the *Règlement pour une métropole mixte* to 40%. Noting that social and racial inequalities are exposed and exacerbated by the COVID-19 health crisis in certain neighbourhoods, the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (CDPDJ) also suggests increasing access to social housing in order to fight poverty and avoid the tearing of the social fabric.<sup>43</sup>

Efforts must also be made to develop a social housing supply that meets the specific needs of women such as immigrant or non-status women, Indigenous women, women with disabilities and seniors.<sup>44</sup>

#### 1.3.2.3 Fighting poverty and social exclusion

When it comes to the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the *Bilan du plan d'action en égalité 2015-2018* has little to say. It reports on four measures to take GBA+ into account in the enumeration of homeless people and the funding of three Femmes-relais projects.

As highlighted in several studies,<sup>45</sup> including the CM's statement, *L'itinérance des femmes à Montréal : voir l'invisible*, homelessness among women is rising and becoming more complex. Homeless women are often invisible, are now or have been at greater risk of various types of violence, and present severe mental health problems. Also, Indigenous women, immigrant women and trans women are disproportionately represented.

At the same time, resources on the ground are insufficient and workers are overwhelmed.<sup>46</sup> "In resources dedicated to women, the demand far exceeds the number of places available: the shelter occupancy rate is 100 % or higher. These resources regularly turn women away for lack of space... The lack of space may be due to the underfunding of women's resources. [In 2018], Le Chaînon and the Pavillon Patricia Mackenzie decried unequal funding: while men's homeless shelters are subsidized at \$26 per bed, women's homeless shelters receive \$9 per bed. They make up for the gap with fundraising activities."<sup>47</sup> [Translation]

Considering these disparities, CM members have already recommended in their homelessness statement<sup>48</sup> that the City implement targeted measures to address women's homelessness, support homeless women and their organizations, and improve the socio-economic conditions of women at risk of homelessness. A special effort must be made with respect to enumeration, which currently takes into account visible homelessness, with the result that women's homelessness remains uncounted.

With respect to poverty, the situation of women in Montréal continues to be very troubling. In 2019, women Québecers held 60 % of the low-paying jobs.<sup>49</sup> One quarter of them worked part time<sup>50</sup> and their hourly wage represented 88.6 % of what men were paid.<sup>51</sup> In Montréal, 38.4 % of women tenants devoted 30 % or more of their income to rent, and 17.5 % of them spent 50 % or more of their income on rent.<sup>52</sup> What's more, 7% of women on the Island of Montréal relied on social assistance.<sup>53</sup>

The CM therefore reiterates the importance of implementing all necessary means to promote women's access to a decent income.<sup>54</sup> This measure is all the more important today, at a time when women are experiencing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in several spheres, particularly with regard to job losses. In April 2020, the unemployment rate in Montréal reached 18.2%.<sup>55</sup> In Québec, after three months, a comparison of May 2020 data with February data (prepandemic situation) shows that the decline in employment affects women more (-14.7 per cent) than men (-12.3 per cent).<sup>56</sup>

Finally, concerning poverty and social exclusion, CM members are also deeply concerned about the extremely precarious conditions in which many Indigenous women live in Montréal. Recent studies have shown that they are disproportionately affected by poverty, violence, social inequality, racism and discriminatory behaviours perpetrated against Indigenous communities.<sup>57</sup> In 2018, the enumeration of people experiencing homelessness on the Island of Montréal estimated that Indigenous people made up 12% of the sample, while they represent a little less than 1% of the Montréal population. Inuit people represented 25% of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness, whereas they constitute only 5% of the Indigenous population in Montréal.<sup>58</sup>

The CM welcomes the appointment of a Commissioner for Relations with Indigenous Peoples, Marie-Ève Bordeleau, who is responsible for advising the City on relations with Indigenous people and developing a reconciliation strategy for the City of Montréal.<sup>59</sup> The City must nonetheless improve its service offer by taking into account Indigenous women's specific needs. Our statement on women's homelessness, *L'itinérance des femmes à Montréal : voir l'invisible,* includes recommendations for improving the relations of the City and Montréal police (SPVM) with First Nations and Inuit people.<sup>60</sup>

#### 1.3.3 The CM's Recommendations Concerning Services for Women

#### Safety

• **R8** That the City of Montréal implement actions related to UN Women's "Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces" program, which it endorsed in 2019.

**R8 a.** That the City of Montréal devote financial resources to implement these actions.

**R8 b**. That the City of Montréal implement these actions in collaboration with women's groups specializing in women's safety issues in public spaces, as well as with the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) and the Service de police de la City of Montréal (SPVM) for actions within their jurisdictions.

• **R9** That the City of Montréal update the Guide d'aménagement pour un environnement urbain sécuritaire using an intersectional perspective to address women's safety in public spaces.

**R9 a.** That the City of Montréal mandate the Service de l'urbanisme et de la mobilité (SUM) to redesign the Guide, in collaboration with the Service de la diversité et de l'inclusion sociale (SDIS) and women's groups specializing in women's safety issues in public spaces.

**R9 b.** That the City of Montréal promote the Guide so that it can be implemented in the central city and all boroughs.

#### Housing

• R10 That the City of Montréal adopt a housing strategy that recognizes the right to housing.<sup>61</sup>

**R10 a.** That the housing supply resulting from this strategy be accessible to all women.

**R10 b.** That this strategy be based on a GBA+ to address the barriers women face and to take into account their specific needs.

• R11 That the City of Montréal improve its social housing supply.

**R11 a.** That the City of Montréal amend its *Règlement pour une métropole* mixte to increase its objectives for the inclusion of social housing to a minimum of 40%, with the aim of truly meeting the needs of tenant households, rather than simply assigning 20% to social housing and 20% to affordable housing.

**R11 b.** That the City of Montréal commit to reserving a percentage of social and community housing units for women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, women with disabilities and Indigenous women.

**R11 c.** That the City of Montréal recognize the right to housing for people without status or with precarious status. To this end, that it abolish, as recommended by the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM), the clause imposed by the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) in its AccèsLogis Montréal program that restricts access to social and community housing to people with citizen or permanent resident status.<sup>62</sup>

**R11 d.** That the City of Montréal develop an action plan to ensure that all social and community housing is universally accessible.

• **R12** That the City of Montréal implement measures to combat harassment and all other forms of violence experienced by women in their housing, whether social, community or private.

#### Fighting poverty and social exclusion

- **R13** That the City of Montréal provide substantial and recurrent financial support to women's groups and organizations that help women who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- **R14** That the City of Montréal take into account the hidden homelessness of women in its enumeration. To do so, that it applies GBA+ and adopts diversified methods to ensure the collection of specific data on all homeless women (immigrant, refugee and non-status women; Indigenous women; women with disabilities; 2ELGBTQQIA<sup>63</sup> and older women).
- **R15** That the City of Montréal take into account the specific needs of Indigenous women in the design, implementation and evaluation of the *Stratégie de réconciliation avec les peuples autochtones.*

#### 1.4 Women, Drivers of Economic Development

Representing 48% of the working population in the metropolis,<sup>64</sup> women participate massively in the city's economic development. The members of the CM encourage the City of Montréal to systematically integrate gender issues in economic development.

#### 1.4.1 Progress

CM members noted that the two actions planned to support women as drivers of economic development could not be carried out because they concerned the local development centres (CLDs), which were abolished shortly after publication of the 2015-2018 equality action plan. The *Bilan du plan d'action en égalité 2015-2018*, however, highlights an advance in equality: Parity was achieved on the boards of directors of the six PME MTL poles, a City of Montréal business support network whose mission was formerly entrusted to the CLDs and the Corporation de développement économique communautaire de Montréal (CDEC).<sup>65</sup>

#### 1.4.2 Challenges

The members of the CM deplore the fact that there were so few actions planned or carried out to support women as drivers of economic development, and that women and economic development was addressed exclusively from an entrepreneurship perspective. In 2008, the equality policy already highlighted our lack of knowledge about women's real participation in Montréal's economic development.<sup>66</sup> In 2012, the CM recommended that collecting and producing gendered data be systematized in organizations that generate studies and statistics on the economic situation in Montréal.<sup>67</sup> This recommendation is still relevant today, as is the recommendation to integrate gender equality criteria into the criteria for awarding contracts to businesses.<sup>68</sup>

#### 1.5 Presence of Montréal Women on the International Scene

The issue of equality between women and men and among women is becoming increasingly important in all political sectors on the international scene. CM members encourage the City to develop more concrete practices related to equality, both in the context of missions abroad and in the context of the City's international representation.

#### 1.5.1 Progress

The members of the CM praise the actions taken by the City of Montréal to promote equality between women and men on the international scene, such as the presentation of the 2015-2018 equality action plan in various international forums, participation in the UN Women Global Forum in 2018, and gender equality initiatives in the Haiti-Canada Municipal Cooperation Program.

#### 1.5.2 Challenges

CM members believe that the City of Montréal can do more to achieve one of the objectives of the equality policy: "That in all of the City's international representation activities, elected officials and civil servants testify to the importance of the equality of women and men, as reflected in the *Montréal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities.*" <sup>69</sup> [Translation]

CM members therefore reiterate certain good practices in this regard, such as the equal representation of women and men in missions abroad, as well as the application of GBA+ in strategic orientations and international projects so that they benefit women as much as men.<sup>70</sup> The City of Montréal could draw inspiration from the federal government's international feminist policy,<sup>71</sup> which includes performance indicators on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

#### 1.5.3 The CM's Recommendations Concerning the Presence of Montréal Women on the International Scene

- **R16** That the City of Montréal ensure a 40% to 60% representation of women (the "parity zone") among its representatives, including civil servants and elected officials, and for missions and projects abroad.
- **R17** That the City of Montréal ensure that the principle of equality between women and men and among all women is systematically integrated into the international cooperation missions and projects that it supports and supervises. That it participate in equality work in international associations such as Metropolis and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) of which it is a member.

## **2** THE CONSEIL DES MONTRÉALAISES' VISION OF A FEMINIST CITY FREE OF DISCRIMINATION

How do we rethink the City of Montréal in terms of equality and the status of women? What are the structural and systemic causes that perpetuate, even accentuate, cycles of exclusion and poverty among women in our metropolis? What conditions for success must the City put in place so that all Montréal women can enjoy their full rights and access to services, as stipulated in the *Montréal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities?* 

These questions constitute the heart of the second section of our statement. Taking our critical analysis of the *Bilan du plan d'action en égalité 2015-2018* a step further, the CM members share our vision here of a city moving toward de facto equality between women and men and among all women.

De facto equality is rooted in two guiding principles: combating discrimination and recognizing women as agents of change. To be embodied, it also requires conditions for success, both in terms of political will and resources.

#### 2.1 Right to the City for all Women

#### 2.1.1 A city for all Montréal women

In the introduction of its draft policy *Pour une participation égalitaire des femmes et des hommes à la vie de Montréal* presented by the municipal government in 2007, we read "one thing is certain, the equality of women and men is a question of fundamental rights and can only benefit all members of society."<sup>72</sup> [Translation]

The CM believes that the goal of achieving equality for all must guide all of the City of Montréal's actions. This is imperative if we are to achieve genuine equality between women and men and among women.

The *Montréal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities* stipulates in its first article that "the city constitutes a territory and a living space where the dignity and integrity of the human being, tolerance, peace, inclusion and equality among all citizens must be promoted."<sup>73</sup> In this sense, the City is committed to "supporting equality between women and men."<sup>74</sup>

Achieving equality means that all Montréal women can fully enjoy all of their rights. In other words, Montréal women must be able to enjoy the "right to the city."

This concept, first developed by French sociologist Henri Lefebvre, <sup>75</sup> emphasizes that the city must belong to those who live in it. If all Montréal women are to be able to appropriate the city in this way, they must be guaranteed their right to participate in city life and appropriate public space. The right to appropriate is being able to benefit from all that the city has to offer, regardless of gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, etc.<sup>76</sup> This right requires, for example, that all women be able to exercise their right to housing and their right to live in safe public spaces and use accessible public transportation. As for the right to participation, it is about women being able to participate in defining and shaping the city so that their living environments reflect their needs and aspirations.<sup>77</sup> Only when women are able to enjoy all their rights can equality be said to have been achieved.

In Montréal, the importance of women's right to the city was underscored on March 8, 2019, when Mayor Valérie Plante, along with the mayors of Mexico City and Barcelona, signed the The *Right to the City for Women*, developed by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), of which Montréal is a member.

For all Montréal women to enjoy the right to the city, municipal services must be adapted to their multiple realities. A municipal government that is sensitive to the diverse and differentiated needs of women and men is constantly questioning how gender, age, ethnicity, disability status, sexual orientation, migration status, socio-economic status or Indigenous identity promotes or limits access to municipal services. A deep understanding of the barriers faced by women— whether geographic, economic, physical, in housing, urban facilities, or cultural activities— enables decision-makers to re-evaluate service delivery and adjust it to the diverse realities of the population. Paying special attention to gender and other forms of discrimination is integral to achieving a more egalitarian and inclusive city.

In the following paragraphs, the CM sets out the guiding principles and conditions for success that must guide all of the City's actions so that all women can fully enjoy their rights in Montréal. As early as 1988, the Femmes et villes collective called on elected municipal officials to take women into account in all municipal activities.<sup>78</sup> More than 30 years later, the CM feels it is high time that women were considered in all areas of the City's jurisdiction. This implies not confining equality actions to the field of social development alone. Adherence to these principles and conditions in all areas of the City's operations is necessary to achieve equality between men and women and among women.

#### 2.1.2 The CM's Recommendations on the Right to the City

• **R18** That the City of Montréal systematically integrate GBA+ into municipal plans, strategies and work sites, including action plans on economic development, climate plan, urban planning, universal access work site, strategy for reconciliation with Indigenous people, housing strategy, procurement strategy, public participation and citizen engagement policy.

#### **Overcoming Barriers to Women's Mobility**

To ensure the achievement of genuine equality between women and men and among all women, the differentiated needs of women must first be taken into account when designing municipal actions. As highlighted in many CM statements, women have specific realities that require specific measures in all of the City's areas of jurisdiction, whether it be safety, transportation, recreation and culture, social housing or urban planning, etc.

For example, CM members are advocating that the differentiated needs of all women be taken into account to determine the measures the City could implement to reduce inequalities in public transit.

Indeed, in many respects, the mobility habits of Montréal women differ from those of their fellow citizens because of gender relations. According to the 2018 Origin-Destination Survey,<sup>79</sup> women accounted for nearly 54% of all public transit users in Montréal, although the car remains their main mode of transportation in urban travel. It is also noted that Montréal women's travel areas remain predominantly local, regardless of where they live.<sup>80</sup> The fact that women are more often required to balance work and family responsibilities means more trips in a day and a higher percentage of stops in a day. Mobility becomes more complicated when it depends on public transportation.

Geographic and physical barriers, combined with barriers to women's mobility, can also increase disparities in access to quality employment, housing, and community services.<sup>81</sup> In addition, public transit is often insufficient, not adapted and not very safe with respect to the specific needs of all Montréal women. These situations necessarily have repercussions on women's overall autonomy. Finally, it is essential to accelerate implementation of universal accessibility throughout the public transit system, specifically, by prioritizing subway stations and major bus routes, and by taking into account the accessibility of people with disabilities as well as people with reduced mobility, families with strollers, and so on.<sup>82</sup>

The difficulties women experience in accessing public transit is a factor in social exclusion and poverty. These demonstrated links between obstacles to travel and women's precariousness are in line with the UN's reflections on sustainable mobility and gender realities<sup>83</sup> and with those of Metropolis, the world association of major metropolises, which considers that "mobility has become an essential tool to the right to the city."<sup>84</sup> In the coming decades, gender will become increasingly relevant in strategic planning for sustainable mobility. Understanding women's modes of transportation is therefore fundamental to validating the City's interventions so that they promote the appropriation of urban space by all.

#### The CM's Recommendations on Public Transit

- **R19** That the City of Montréal continue to promote social public transit fares with a view to fighting poverty and social exclusion.
- **R20** That the City of Montréal work in partnership with all concerned organizations and authorities with a view to implementing measures to meet the needs of women with disabilities in terms of adapted and public transit.
- **R21** That the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) take into account the needs of all women in redesigning the bus system.
- **R22** That the STM ensure the implementation of measures favouring the participation of women in its public consultations.
- **R23** That the STM and the City of Montréal ensure that the principles of the *Guide d'aménagement pour un environnement urbain sécuritaire* are systematically applied in and around Metro and commuter train stations, around major boarding points on the public transit network and at pedestrian links giving access to the network.

#### **2.2 Guiding Principles**

The members of the CM believe there are two guiding principles that should underpin the design of City policies and their implementation: combating discrimination and recognizing women as agents of change.

To ensure that these guiding principles are truly embodied and lead to structural changes, CM members urge the City and its upper-level management to take them into account in its "strategic alignment process, the objective of which is to create a common and shared vision of the metropolis for the next decade."<sup>85</sup> [Translation]

#### 2.2.1 Fighting all forms of discrimination against women

#### 2.2.1.1 Recognizing discrimination against women

For the first time in its history, in the spring of 2020, the City of Montréal recognized "the systemic nature of racism and discrimination, while committing itself to fighting them." <sup>86</sup> In response to the report of the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM), <sup>87</sup> Mayor Valérie Plante said: "We are firmly committed to implementing systemic solutions to these systemic problems. We must act now and the City of Montréal must be exemplary."<sup>88</sup> [Translation]

For CM members, this is an important milestone because we believe that combating all forms of discrimination against women, in all their diversity, is the first guiding principle the City must follow in all areas of action within its jurisdiction.

In recent years, the CM has hammered home the importance of implementing gender-based and intersectional analysis (GBA+) to combat the systemic and persistent discrimination women face. We make no exception here.

Women represent half the population of Montréal. Combating discrimination against women should therefore be a priority in the City's actions. In fact, "a true democracy cannot be exercised without the equal contribution of women and men in all spheres of human activity, in political, social, economic and cultural life," states the City of Montréal's equality policy.<sup>89</sup>

CM members recognize the progress that has been made on equality issues since this policy was introduced in 2008. However, we believe that more work needs to be done to achieve real equality between women and men and among all women. In this regard, UN Women emphasizes that while much progress has been made in addressing gender-based discrimination, political efforts are needed to assist the most marginalized women, including by addressing growing inequalities and multiple forms of discrimination.<sup>90</sup>

The Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse du Québec points out that under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms "every person has a right to full and equal recognition and exercise of their human rights and freedoms, without distinction, exclusion or preference based on race, colour, sex, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, sexual orientation, civil status, age except as provided by law, religion, political convictions, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, a handicap or the use of any means to palliate a handicap. Discrimination exists where such a distinction, exclusion or preference has the effect of nullifying or impairing such right."<sup>91</sup> It is "...fuelled by stereotypes and prejudices, conscious or unconscious, which, in this case, disqualify or stigmatize individuals because of their color, appearance or membership, real or presumed, in a group." <sup>92</sup> Systemic discrimination is "...the sum of disproportionate exclusionary effects resulting from the combined effect of prejudiced and stereotypical attitudes, often unconscious, and policies and practices adopted generally without regard to the characteristics of members of groups covered by the prohibition of discrimination."<sup>93</sup>

This definition reminds us that achieving de facto equality is a major, but unavoidable, challenge for all societies committed to social justice and democracy.

In its report on racism and systemic discrimination, *Racisme et discrimination systémiques dans les compétences de la Ville de Montréal*, the OCPM states that "civil servants insist on the neutral and universal nature of the services provided with the mission to serve, in an identical manner, the entire population, regardless of origin... The commission noted an unease or lack of willingness among many civil servants, managers and employees to identify the groups most likely to experience situations of systemic racism and discrimination in their boroughs."<sup>94</sup>

#### 2.2.1.2 Turning challenges into opportunities

In an effort to equip municipalities to recognize blind spots within their jurisdictions, the City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) published *Advancing Equity and Inclusion: A Guide for Municipalities,* <sup>95</sup> developed in Ottawa with many partners, in 2015. In this sub-section, we take up several ideas discussed in the guide.

The guide explains in concrete terms a comprehensive approach to quickly correct the difficulties municipalities encounter, difficulties that will mount as communities experience growing inequalities in terms of resources, access to services and power. These injustices engender social and financial costs for municipalities, while "equity and inclusion create more sustainable cities where people from all walks of life have the right to, and can participate fully in, social, economic, political, and cultural life."<sup>96</sup>

The shift in position required to address all forms of discrimination can be summarized by three fundamental questions that the City should ask itself in all its decision-making processes:

- 1. Who is excluded from this process?
- 2. What barriers contribute to this exclusion
- 3. What must we do differently to eliminate these barriers and ensure inclusion?

CM members felt it was important to note that the City will experience both successes and setbacks due to the many challenges inherent in this massive task. The City should take the attitude that these challenges can be turned into opportunities. The CM stresses that this is a dynamic process in which all involved must embrace the inherent tensions. To do so, it is important to keep in mind that identity and related issues are complex and fluid, hence the importance of listening and working collaboratively with women's groups and diverse communities as they are eager to contribute to finding solutions.

We would also mention that within these diverse communities, whether Indigenous or racialized, there is a diversity of perspectives that need to be taken into account.

Achieving equality and inclusion is an ongoing process. Consequently, the City must develop policies and action plans with a view to sustainability, while demonstrating the ability to adapt in their implementation.

#### 2.2.1.3 Improving governance, policy and the public service

CM members reaffirm the urgent need for the City to make structural changes to prevent discrimination, not just limit its consequences. We call on the City to question, analyze and take action upstream on the various systemic causes that trap too many Montréal women in poverty and social exclusion.

Addressing systemic discrimination against all women requires both a comprehensive picture of the situation, recognition of this discrimination and the political will to end it.<sup>97</sup> It also means devoting adequate time and resources (human and financial), reflecting on viable solutions and developing policies, orientations and programs in partnership with those directly affected by systemic discrimination.<sup>98</sup>

To be effective, the anti-discrimination principle must be embodied as much in governance as in municipal policies and within the civil service.

In terms of governance, it has been observed that societies that promote equality and inclusion within their institutions pave the way for the "deployment of richer and more comprehensive solutions than if they had been imagined by a homogeneous group." <sup>99</sup> [Translation] According to the World Economic Forum's (WEF) *Global Gender Gap Report 2020* ranking, countries such as Germany, Denmark, Finland and Norway, which have a strong presence of women in politics or on boards of directors, are better able to navigate through the vagaries of social and economic conditions.<sup>100</sup>

With respect to municipal government, the public service must be representative of the population it serves. "As [municipalities] continue to diversify their staff and management so as to be more representative of the communities they serve, their understanding of the perspectives of specific communities deepens."<sup>101</sup>

Finally, the City's policies and action plans must necessarily take into account the differing needs of women and men and all women.

To this end, in the first part of this document (Critical Analysis of the *Bilan du plan d'action en égalité 2015-2018)*, CM members make recommendations to the City to deploy concrete actions aimed at achieving genuine equality between women and men and among all women in governance, municipal policies and within the public service.

In terms of combating discrimination, we make three other priority recommendations.

#### 2.2.1.4 The CM's Recommendations on Combating Discrimination

- **R24** That the City of Montréal recognize the historical, social and economic existence of discrimination based on sex as well as on the 13 other grounds of discrimination invoked by the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.*
- **R25** That the City of Montréal provide mandatory training to the entire municipal civil service (employees, professionals, managers) and to the staff of paramunicipal corporations on sexism and all forms of systemic discrimination (racism, ableism, ageism, etc.), while ensuring that this training is based on GBA+ and carried out in partnership with community organizations involved in combating such discrimination, as recommended by the OCPM.<sup>102</sup>

• **R26** That the City of Montréal ensure that City staff and elected officials are representative of the population of Montréal.

**R26 a.** That the City of Montréal ensure that human resources employees, managers and senior management, who play a significant role in recruitment, are representative of the Montréal population.

#### 2.2.2 Recognizing Montréal Women as Agents of Change

*Il aura fallu une pandémie pour reconnaître la valeur de notre travail* [it took a pandemic to get recognition for the value of our work], stated l'R des centres de femmes du Québec<sup>103</sup> on March 23, 2020.

In the spring of 2020, during the COVID-19 health crisis, many feminist voices, including those of Françoise David,<sup>104</sup> the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ)<sup>105</sup> and the Regroupement des groupes de femmes de la région de la Capitale-Nationale,<sup>106</sup> emphasized the predominant role of women in "care," the "work historically relegated to the female domain, which is the subject of multiple practices that go beyond the maternal function alone, whether we think of domestic work, social work, health care, etc."<sup>107</sup> [Translation]. They also deplored the devaluation, particularly in terms of remuneration, of these traditionally female professions. Women are indeed in the majority in health and social services. They take on the largest share of domestic chores and child care.<sup>108</sup> They also hold the majority of jobs involving the most interaction with the public in essential businesses.

Women in Montréal share this reality. CM members therefore join these feminist voices in reiterating the importance of recognizing and valuing the visible and invisible work of women, as well as their contribution to the social, economic and historical development of Montréal.

The recognition of women as agents of change and builders of the city is the essence of an authentically feminist city. The members of the CM therefore invite the City of Montréal to adhere to this fundamental guiding principle, both as an employer and in the development of its policies and action plans in order to achieve real equality between men and women and among all women.

#### 2.2.2.1 Recognizing women as a pillar of Montréal's social development

Unquestionably, Montréal women are the backbone of the social safety net and support for people in vulnerable situations. Long seen as mere users of municipal services, they have demonstrated over time that their leadership not only contributes to the social transformation of the community, but also helps build a more cohesive and resilient city. Think of their important contributions<sup>109</sup>— often invisible and as volunteers—to the foundation of community clinics, housing committees or women's centres, green alleys, and community clean-ups. These initiatives are all firmly established in Montréal's boroughs.

Community organizations (mainly staffed by women) dedicated to working with people in vulnerable situations play an essential role that enriches the municipal response. Among these, many intervene directly in neighbourhoods to advance rights, fight inequality and improve the living conditions of Montréal women. In 2019, the City adopted a recognition and support policy *[Politique montréalaise pour l'action Communautaire]* to formalize the framework for relations between the municipality and the Montréal community. <sup>110</sup> Through this gesture, applauded by the CM, the municipal government highlighted the significant contribution of these groups and organizations to social and economic development and recognized the importance of women's contribution to the community. In accordance with its means and jurisdiction, the City aims to provide "financial support to the community through programs or action plans with specific budgets.<sup>111</sup> But this far from meets all the needs on the ground.

Women's groups (including women's centres and all local, regional and Québec-wide groups) have for several years faced many challenges affecting the achievement of their mission, particularly with regard to financial stability. Not only do these groups suffer from chronic underfunding by governments, but project-based funding at the expense of mission funding makes them vulnerable, as explained by the Institut de recherche et d'informations socioéconomiques (IRIS)<sup>112</sup> and the Canadian Women's Foundation, among others.<sup>113</sup> "While the first is targeted funding, heavy with bureaucracy and accountability, the second is core funding, which allows community organizations to fulfill their overall mission and respond to the—sometimes unpredictable—needs that arise."<sup>114</sup> [Translation]

Insufficient funding has a direct impact on the quality of essential services offered to users, as well as on the working conditions of community workers (increased demands for subsidies and accountability, overtime, mental workload, burnout, etc.). Do we need to reiterate that women are the majority of those who work in this sector in Québec?<sup>115</sup>

Consequently, and particularly in the context of a health crisis, "... the substantial increase and sustainability of such funding is more necessary than ever"<sup>116</sup> as called for by many women's groups, including the Fédération des femmes du Québec<sup>117</sup> and the Canadian Women's Foundation. <sup>118</sup> The members of the CM therefore invite the City of Montréal to adopt mechanisms to perpetuate the funding of women's groups.

Recognition of the expertise of women's groups must also translate into recognition of the time and expense<sup>119</sup> associated with their participation in municipal affairs, including in the international arena. These groups are increasingly solicited to find solutions to the difficulties experienced by Montréal women on many issues, such as problems of access to housing, women's homelessness, and the integration of newcomers. Their contribution is invaluable to the City's policies and actions.

CM members would also like to highlight the essential contribution of older women to the city's social development and invite the municipal government to recognize their work. Older women make up the majority of volunteers in the non-profit sector and "volunteers over the age of 55 are the most generous with their time and have volunteered for the highest average length of time."<sup>120</sup> [Translation]

#### 2.2.2.2 Recognizing women's contribution to Montréal's economic development

Making up more than half of the population, women contribute significantly to Montréal's economy, whether in the public service or institutions, as entrepreneurs or employees, or through the unpaid work they perform for their families and communities. Regarding the latter, as stated in an Oxfam report "at the base of the economy, girls and women (especially those living in poverty and from marginalized groups) perform the equivalent of 12.5 trillion hours of unpaid care work every day, and much more for poverty wages. Yet their work is essential in our communities. It is the key to successful families and a healthy, productive workforce."<sup>121</sup>

The City of Montréal plays a fundamental role in the city's economic development. As an economic driver, it developed an economic development strategy [Stratégie de développement économique 2018-2022] to "consolidate Montréal's role as an economic force, particularly in sectors of the future, and to make it a reference for innovative, inclusive and sustainable economic development."<sup>122</sup> [Translation] Through eight action plans that give concrete expression to this strategy,<sup>123</sup> the municipal government put in place a series of measures aimed at accelerating Montréal's economic development.

The City of Montréal is also a major employer in the Montréal agglomeration and awards contracts for goods, services and work performed worth more than \$1 billion annually.<sup>124</sup> The municipal government therefore has a great deal of influence and the means to make a difference for both individuals and organizations that participate in economic life.

What contribution do Montréal women make to the economic development of their city? What are the City's economic measures that affect them? Many questions arise in this regard.

With respect to the economic development action plans, CM members are pleased that the City is proposing actions to support the development of women's entrepreneurship in the *Plan d'action en entrepreneuriat*.<sup>125</sup> Unfortunately, we note that women are invisible in the seven other plans, which do not include any data, targets or actions for women. The City proposes various actions in these plans, but we have several questions with regard to the inclusion of women in these actions and the impacts on them. For example, what is the proportion of women in projects and initiatives funded and supported by the City? Also, what is women's share in labour force development initiatives funded by the City? Does the City have gender parity targets in the foreign economic and trade missions it coordinates?

When it comes to City contracts, how much of this money goes to companies that have women in their management or board of directors? In terms of the City as an employer, how much of the City's payroll is spent on women, and for which women? What proportions of the payroll go to Indigenous women, women with disabilities, and women from visible and ethnic minorities? What is the distribution of permanent and temporary jobs for women and men?

De facto equality between women and men and among all women is certainly a social justice issue, but it is also an important factor in economic development and prosperity. "Improving women's economic security is critical to the maintenance and growth of the Canadian economy," said members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women in its report, "Women's Economic Security: Securing the Future of the Canadian Economy." <sup>126</sup> This committee recommends many measures to strengthen women's economic security and leadership, including the development of gender-sensitive economic policies, the implementation of women-friendly workplace policies, increasing the number of women in traditionally male-dominated workplaces, in senior management positions and on boards of directors.

CM members therefore feel it is essential that the City ensure that employment policies and strategies address women in all spheres of Montréal's economic development.

To this end, the CM urges the City of Montréal to apply GBA+ to its economic development policies and plans, as well as to its calls for tenders and service contracts, and also to carry out a project on economic development and women in Montréal in order to take stock of the situation.

#### 2.2.2.3 Recognizing women as city builders

In recent years, the City of Montréal has taken several significant steps to make women's contribution to the city's development visible. The City set up *Les bâtisseuses de la cité*, a series of appointments paying tribute to Montréal women and highlighting their contribution to the city's development from 2011 to 2017.<sup>127</sup> In 2016, Toponym'Elles, a women's toponymic bank, was created to increase the representation of women in Montréal's toponymy.<sup>128</sup>

Finally, in 2017, following a recommendation by CM members, the City named "Place des Montréalaises" a new public square in honour of the women citizens who have marked the evolution of the city.<sup>129</sup>

CM members welcome these actions and reiterate the importance of pursuing these efforts to highlight women's contribution as actors and builders of the city and to adopt memorial policies in this sense to "institute the creation of collective identities."<sup>130</sup> They also stress the importance of recognizing the contribution of Indigenous women and women of immigrant background whose contributions are invisible in the public space.<sup>131</sup>

#### 2.2.2.4 Adopting non-sexist language to make women more visible

Using non-sexist language, as recommended by the CM in our statement on non-sexist language,<sup>132</sup> is a matter of recognition and respect for women. This is why CM members welcome the City of Montréal's decision, at the May 25, 2020, City Council meeting, to follow up on these recommendations.<sup>133</sup> We now call on the municipal government to implement them as soon as possible.

#### 2.2.2.5 The CM's Recommendations for Recognizing Women as Agents of Change

• **R27** That the City of Montréal recognize women's contribution to Montréal's history and development by giving them greater prominence in the development of its memorial policies (toponymy, commemorations, historical signage, cultural activities and sites, etc.).

**R27 a.** That the City of Montréal recognize the contribution of Indigenous women and immigrant and/or racialized women to the history and development of Montréal.

• **R28** That the City of Montréal recognize the expertise of women's groups and support their capacity to intervene.

**R28 a.** That the City of Montréal adopt mechanisms to allow for a substantial, sustainable and predictable increase in core funding to ensure essential services for women.

**R28 b.** That the City of Montréal provide per diems and reasonable time prior to consultations to encourage and support the participation of women's groups consulted by the City in the development of orientations, programs and policies (e.g. public consultations, working committees, municipal projects, etc.).

**R28 c.** That the City of Montréal ensure that it consults and works in partnership with women's groups in the development and monitoring of equality policies, plans and actions.

• **R29** That the City of Montréal conceives of de facto equality between women and men and among all women as an important driver of economic development.

**R29 a.** That the City of Montréal ensure that studies and statistics on Montréal's economic situation include differentiated and cross-referenced data.

**R29 b.** That the City of Montréal ensure that all women are considered drivers of economic development and that it take all women into account in each of its economic development action plans.

**R29 c.** That the City of Montréal include terms and conditions on equality between women and men and among all women in the award criteria for all economic development projects that it subsidizes and in contracts to businesses registered in its supplier registry—particularly businesses that carry out infrastructure projects. For example, these criteria could take into account the percentage of women sitting on a company's board of directors, the percentage of women employees, compliance with pay equity obligations, etc.

**R29 d.** That the City of Montréal provide GBA+ training and support to economic development and procurement department staff.

#### 2.3 Conditions for Success of a Feminist and Discrimination-free City

This section presents the conditions that CM members consider necessary to put the guiding principles into practice and become a truly feminist city.

#### 2.3.1 A responsible city

In order to support equality between women and men and among all women, CM members reiterate the importance of effective political and administrative responsibility and accountability for municipal equality measures.<sup>134</sup>

#### 2.3.1.1 Promote the cross-cutting nature of equality issues

As a first step, maintaining the positions of women elected officials responsible for the status of women is essential to ensure follow-up on issues relating to equality between women and men and among women. CM members would like to acknowledge the leadership and commitment of the female elected officials responsible for these issues. Nevertheless, greater involvement of the City's political and decision-making bodies in monitoring these issues would give them greater visibility and make them a cross-cutting concern.

In designing the equality policy, a City standing committee recommended the creation of a policy implementation committee that includes the elected official in charge, civil servants and people from civil society.<sup>135</sup> Given that the next social development action plan cuts across several municipal service sectors, CM members believe it is all the more important that such a committee follow up on it. Regular monitoring of the action plan's implementation makes it possible to report on progress and challenges. In addition, the reports produced by this committee would act as a public accountability mechanism. In our opinion, achieving the targets of the integrated action plan for social development requires a broad consensus and a concerted effort on the part of services, boroughs and community partners.

Finally, the CM reiterates the need for a cross-cutting consideration of equality issues at the administrative level as well. In this sense, responsibility, and therefore accountability, for gender mainstreaming and GBA+ must rest with members of the departments, directorates, divisions and boroughs. For example, it is necessary to include equality targets in managerial objectives and in the performance evaluation criteria for management staff in order to truly promote cross-functionality and the achievement of results.

2 The conseil des montréalaises' vision of a feminist city free of discrimination

#### 2.3.1.2 Involve partners in equality actions

CM members also stress the importance of greater involvement of citizens, community organizations and equal partners in all stages of municipal policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Their involvement with the City's departments in regular consultations, planned and communicated sufficiently in advance, is necessary to ensure a better understanding of the needs, realities and impacts of the measures on the ground, to the identification of good practices, and to facilitate discussion on the different experiences relating to policies and action plans. Greater involvement of these individuals and groups of experts would highlight the City's commitment to equality, facilitate citizen participation in the development and monitoring of equality measures, and develop a better understanding of the realities, needs and experiences of citizens.<sup>136</sup>

#### 2.3.1.3 Develop monitoring and evaluation indicators

As pointed out in our critical analysis, the lack of monitoring indicators in the *Bilan du plan d'action en égalité 2015-2018* is a significant methodological shortcoming, since it does not enable assessment of progress and the effects of implemented measures.

In this respect, CM members insist on the importance of developing monitoring and evaluation indicators for each of the measures formulated in future social development action plans. These indicators are an indispensable means of measuring the achievement of identified targets, the use of resources and, more generally, the progress of work and the implementation of a policy or action plan.<sup>137</sup>

Having indicators makes it possible to quantify or qualify the gaps between expected and achieved results, while highlighting gaps and blind spots in a policy or action plan. The municipal government is then able to make the appropriate adjustments to ensure the actual achievement of stated objectives. Moreover, they are necessary to ensure transparency in assessing the impacts of the policy on the ground. Clearly, to monitor and evaluate an action plan, specific and measurable objectives and a timeline must be included. In addition, it is essential that indicators (quantitative and qualitative) be identified ahead of time, as the action plan is being developed, to ensure consistency in the definition of the objectives targeted by each action. Finally, the action plan should be evaluated using the indicators at regular intervals during implementation.

#### **Examples of monitoring and evaluation indicators**

In our statement *Pour un nouveau départ : relever le défi du prochain plan d'action en faveur de l'égalité*,<sup>138</sup> CM members presented examples of indicators for monitoring the equality policy based on the *Guide pour la mise en oeuvre de la Charte européenne pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes dans la vie locale* [guide for implementing the *European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life*].<sup>"139</sup> Here are some of these indicators.

lssues	Indicators
The City, as an employer	Number and percentage of women and men, visible minorities, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and Indigenous people in upper-level management positions
Housing	Number and percentage of women and men, visible minorities, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and Indigenous people living in unsanitary housing
Transportation	Number and percentage of women and men, visible minorities, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and Indigenous people using public transit
Violence	"Subjective" measure of insecurity: percentage of women and men, visible minorities, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and Indigenous people who do not feel safe in public spaces
Safe urban design	Number and percentage of development projects in the public domain that have applied the standards of the <i>Guide d'aménagement pour un environnement urbain sécuritaire</i>
Anti-poverty action	Amount of financial support the City has provided to resources specifically addressed to women experiencing homelessness and as a percentage of the total amount provided to resources for people experiencing homelessness

#### 2.3.1.4 Involve boroughs in equality actions

Finally, CM members wish to reiterate the importance of promoting greater collaboration between the central city and the boroughs in terms of equality between men and women and between all women. Greater collaboration must begin with an inventory of the boroughs' existing good equality practices.<sup>140</sup> Indeed, several boroughs are already actively partnering with neighbourhood organizations. Therefore, CM members encourage the City to organize data collection on these practices with a view to better understanding the extent and form of these practices and facilitating their replication on a larger scale.

The CM also stresses the need to develop and adopt, in each borough, a local action plan for equality between women and men and among all women.<sup>141</sup> Since each borough differs in terms of the socio-economic composition of its population as well as its practices and priorities, local action plans must be developed and implemented to take into account the specific realities of women in each neighbourhood. These local action plans could also be used to reaffirm the boroughs' commitment to achieving de facto equality and facilitate the adaptation of objectives and priorities according to local needs, experiences and realities.

In order to ensure proper coordination of actions and practices between the central city and the boroughs, the CM believes it is important to appoint an elected official from each borough administration to be responsible for equality between women and men and among women, as well as an employee to be in charge of this file. In addition to acting as an intermediary between the central city and the other boroughs and facilitating the exchange of good practices in the area of equality, the elected official will be required to publicly report on equality issues to community partners and civil society.<sup>142</sup>

#### 2.3.1.5 The CM's Recommendations Concerning the City's Responsibility

- **R30** That the City of Montréal set up a committee to monitor the implementation of social development plans, that this committee be parity-based and include elected officials, civil servants from several departments and boroughs as well as community partners working with women.
- **R31** That the City of Montréal develop monitoring and evaluation indicators, in collaboration with experts in each sector and community partners, for each of the measures in the social development action plans.
- **R32** That the boroughs of the City of Montréal develop and adopt local action plans promoting equality between women and men and among all women, that these action plans put forward commitments and define concrete measures in the areas of action boroughs have identified as priorities.

**R32 a.** That each borough of the City of Montréal assign one employee and one elected official to be responsible for implementing the local equality action plan. These people will contribute to equality accountability by working closely with the diversity and social inclusion service [Service de la diversité et de l'inclusion sociale (SDIS)], which monitors equality policy at the central level.

**R32 b.** That the City of Montréal identify and disseminate the boroughs' promising practices in terms of equality between women and men and among all women.

#### 2.3.2 Establish and sustain the use of GBA+ in the City of Montréal

#### 2.3.2.1 Systematize GBA+ in decision-making processes and action plans

In order for all Montréal women to enjoy their rights, the City has a responsibility to remove systemic barriers to equality in all of its areas of action. The second condition for fulfilling this responsibility is the inclusion of intersectional gender-based analysis (GBA+) in municipal government practices. As participants at the day-long meeting to evaluate the 2015-2018 equality action plan [*Journée bilan du Plan d'action en égalité 2015-2018*] explained, "GBA+ can help the City remove these barriers and create the conditions for [all categories of women] to fully access their rights."<sup>143</sup> [Translation]

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine [a body of the Québec government] defines gender-based analysis (GBA) as "an analytical process that promotes the achievement of equality between women and men through the orientations and actions of society's decision-making bodies at the local, regional and national levels."<sup>144</sup> [Translation] However, gender is not the only marker of a person's identity. It is for this reason that several institutions, administrations and organizations now combine GBA with the intersectional approach (the "+"). This intersectional approach, GBA+, "aims, at the same time, to take into consideration the impacts of other social power relations or systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, classism, etc. Hence, GBA+ highlights the distinct forms of oppression experienced by different women in specific contexts."<sup>145</sup> [Translation]

The objective of integrating GBA+ into the City's processes is to promote the achievement of equality between men and women and among all women, and to optimize the public service offer, because "contrary to long-standing belief, a service offer cannot be neutral."<sup>146</sup> [Translation] In fact, very often, seemingly neutral regulations, standards, policies, practices or requirements can have a discriminatory effect on several groups of people. By way of illustration, while a homelessness action plan applies to all people experiencing homelessness, the plan is not neutral because, in reality, it does not take into account the specificities of homelessness among women, who are much less visible. If women are absent from the enumeration, the action plan underestimates the importance of having specific measures for women, and the budgets allocated to homeless organizations that work with a female clientele are improperly estimated and insufficient in relation to real needs.

Practically speaking, GBA+ is a governance tool that enables the collection and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data on the specific realities of women and men in all their diversity. The interpretation of these data makes it possible to note and observe the differentiated impacts between women and men, and among women themselves, of the measures envisaged or adopted by the City. This analysis therefore directly influences the development of policies, programs and projects in terms of design, implementation and evaluation. These processes, when shaped by GBA+, are more easily adapted to the needs and interests of Montréal women.

Beyond analysis, it also represents a perspective of justice and social transformation, since GBA+ makes it possible to understand the functioning of systemic discrimination that individuals experience.<sup>147</sup> It provides a critical view of biases, attitudes and discriminatory practices. Furthermore, this perspective makes it possible to prevent and reduce historical, social and economic inequalities based on gender, age, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, migratory status, socioeconomic status, Indigenous identity, etc.

In sum, when GBA+ is systematically applied to the development of policy measures, it offers a more refined reading of the various dimensions that make up a community's social fabric and, by the same token, opens the door to more equitable and inclusive municipal interventions.<sup>148</sup>

In order to ensure GBA+'s systematic and enduring implementation in City and borough practices, certain winning conditions must be put in place. The former Conférence régionale des élu.es (CRÉ) of the agglomeration of Longueuil carried out a study on GBA in local and regional fields of intervention<sup>149</sup> that identified the parameters to be respected for effective implementation of this tool. In accordance with these parameters, the CM stresses the importance of:

- the availability of comparative and differentiated population data (quantitative and qualitative);
- the presence of an administrative structure that ensures the implementation and development of a GBA+ culture;
- the commitment of elected officials and civil servants;
- the allocation of sufficient human and financial resources;
- taking into account the contribution of women's groups;
- indicators that make it possible to measure progress and achievement of predefined targets;
- administrative and political accountability mechanisms.

In November 2018, the City of Montréal announced its intention to eventually integrate differentiated analysis aimed at preventing systemic discrimination into all its policies, programs and services.<sup>150</sup> To test this approach, the City has set up a two-year pilot project, in partnership with Relais-femmes, consisting of GBA+ training and support in several departments, divisions and boroughs. In 2019 and 2020, a video clip and a checklist<sup>151</sup> on GBA+ were created for City employees.

CM members commend the City for these measures and encourage the City to continue its efforts to incorporate GBA+ into its decision-making processes in a sustainable manner.

#### 2.3.2.2 The CM's Recommendations Concerning GBA+

- **R33** That the City of Montréal adopt an action plan (with targets, budget, progress indicators and timetable) for the implementation of GBA+ in all action plans, policies, programs, projects and budgets of the central city and the boroughs.
  - **R33 a.** That the City of Montréal include in project schedules the time required to complete a GBA+.
  - **R33 b.** That the City of Montréal devote a percentage of each project's budget to GBA+.

**R33 c.** That the City of Montréal produce and make public differentiated and cross-tabulated population data.

**R33 d.** That the City of Montréal develop an accountability system (with assigned managers) on the integration of GBA+ in the projects of the departments and boroughs.

• **R34** That the City of Montréal consolidate its knowledge of GBA+ and its in-house expertise in the field.

**R34 a.** That the City of Montréal train a critical mass of civil servants and all upper-level management and elected officials on GBA+ (training must be mandatory, offered on an ongoing basis and adapted to each department).

**R34 b.** That the City of Montréal develop in-house expertise in GBA+ (with, for example, resource people in each department and borough, experts to accompany the implementation of GBA+, GBA+ guides for each department, centralized documentation of GBA+ application in the City, and a GBA+ community of practice).

**R34 c.** That the City of Montréal develop and widely disseminate an internal and external communication plan on the implementation of GBA+.

#### **Gender-sensitive budgeting**

More than any other governance tool, the City's budget reflects the City's priorities, whether in the areas of housing, mobility, social and economic development or ecological transition. In the federal government, since 2018, every budget decision has been informed by GBA+; this is called gender-responsive budgeting. Through gender-responsive budgeting measures, municipal officials can ensure more effective planning of public finances<sup>152</sup> and a more equitable distribution of resources.<sup>153</sup>

According to the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, "gender budgeting is an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. This involves assessing existing budgets at all levels of the budgetary process from a gender perspective, as well as restructuring revenues and expenditures to promote gender equality."<sup>154</sup> Local governments can also measure the differential effects of budgetary measures on women and men in all their diversity.<sup>155</sup> In this sense, the New Urban Agenda calls on signatory governments to "pay particular attention to age- and gender-responsive budgeting."<sup>156</sup> By incorporating GBA+ into its budget decisions, the City is better equipped to meet the needs of different groups and can thus promote equality through its budgeting practices.

For example, the municipality of Ixelles, Belgium, has implemented gender-sensitive budgeting by creating three categories of expenditure in its budget: neutral, gendered and "genderable."

The "neutral" category includes expenses that do not have a gender dimension, such as the purchase of office equipment. The "gendered" category refers to specific measures aimed at equality, such as financial resources allocated to GBA+ training. Finally, the "genderable" category refers to expenditures that may have a differentiated impact on women and men and among women themselves, as in the case of investments in sports infrastructure.

Since the adoption of the gender-sensitive budget, the municipality of Ixelles has, for example, recruited more women in traditionally male occupations and allocated funding to make parks more accessible to all.<sup>157</sup>

#### 2.3.3 Create a Bureau de l'égalité et de la lutte contre les descriminations [Equality and Anti-Discrimination Office]

#### 2.3.3.1 Creation of an Equality and Anti-Discrimination Office

The establishment in Montréal of an administrative structure dedicated to equality and antidiscrimination issues is an idea that has been promoted for almost two decades. At the 2002 Montréal Summit, there was talk of creating a "Bureau Femmes et Ville" to ensure implementation of the equality policy.<sup>158</sup> In 2006, at the conference Montréal, *une ville à la mesure des femmes,* organized by the municipal government, this was a priority proposal:

"That the City establish a status of women office to ensure the implementation and evaluation (observatory) of gender equality by working in conjunction with the City, its boroughs, elected officials and citizens. This office must possess substantial resources from the City's budget to ensure a strategically positioned team that is present in the City and all of its boroughs. This office must be positioned at a high level in the City structure."<sup>159</sup> [Translation]

The request for such an office was reiterated by women's groups attending the day-long evaluation of the last action plan in October 2019.<sup>160</sup> However, to date, there is still no plan for the establishment of this office, and, over the past 15 years, the municipal government has assigned only one person to the equality file within the diversity and social inclusion department (SDIS). Yet, recognized examples of such administrative structures already exist. Cities such as Barcelona, Vienna and Berlin have established equality offices and are now considered leaders on equality issues. The CM believes that the City of Montréal can become a leader in Canada on these issues by creating an entity (here called the Bureau) dedicated to equality and the fight against discrimination.

Currently, women constitute one of many files handled by the SDIS' Division des relations interculturelles et luttes aux discriminations (among files relating to youth, seniors, families, people with disabilities, etc.). CM members urge the City administration to consider women in all City issues (not just social development) and to dedicate specific resources to them.

The Bureau de l'égalité et de la lutte aux discriminations (BÉLD) would be the main administrative base guaranteeing efficient and cross-cutting management of equality and anti-discrimination issues. In this way, all equality and anti-discrimination functions would be brought together in the same administrative unit, preventing responsibility from being stretched too thin across the municipal apparatus. At the moment there is no structure within the City of Montréal that can lead the necessary changes to make equality and an end to discrimination a reality for all Montréal women. In order to achieve this objective, the BÉLD would combine two poles—one concerning equality between men and women and among all women and the other, concerning the fight against all forms of discrimination.

In this capacity, the BÉLD would work with the person who will perform the function of anti-racism and discrimination commissioner, as recommended by the OCPM.<sup>161</sup> The CM praises the City's commitment in this regard<sup>162</sup> and views it as an opportunity to coordinate all of the City's actions in the area of equality and the fight against discrimination.

Another important function of the BÉLD would be to support all departments in applying GBA+ in all the City's and boroughs' spheres of action. Establishing an administrative unit that acts as a central mechanism for GBA+ is essential to ensure its actual application so that it does not end up becoming the concern of everyone and of no one at the same time.<sup>163</sup> To do so, the BÉLD should not be seen as "the GBA+ police," but rather as a resource to support all departments in continuously improving their practices.

The CM stresses the importance of the BÉLD's two poles. They are equally necessary, because equality-seeking actions should not all be grouped under the umbrella of GBA+ and measures to fight discrimination. Women constitute half of the population, not a specific group: taking them into account in a cross-cutting manner must not result in their being made invisible. Specific measures for women are indispensable so that they can enjoy all their rights.

In practice, the BÉLD would make it possible to:

- design, implement and evaluate equality and anti-discrimination policies and programs;
- coordinate interdepartmental actions on equality and anti-discrimination issues;
- promote collaboration with partners on equality and anti-discrimination issues;
- coordinate funding for women's groups;
- solicit the participation of all Montréal women to inform the decision-making process;
- collect data with which to measure progress in equality and the fight against discrimination;
- coordinate the implementation of GBA+ in the central city and in the boroughs;
- assist departments and districts in identifying their organizational capacities for GBA+;
- support the departments and boroughs in applying GBA+ to their projects;
- strengthen internal expertise in GBA+ training and project support;
- facilitate a GBA+ community of practice;
- centralize documentation and document all examples of GBA+ application in order to make the information easily accessible to all members of the administration.

In order for the BÉLD to play its leadership role, its reach and sustainability within the City's administrative structure must be ensured. To this end, the literature provides us with some essential parameters.<sup>164</sup> Hence, the Bureau must:

- have adequate human and financial resources that are recurrent and predictable over the long term;
- be independent;
- be directly attached to upper-level management in order to have a strategic position within the municipal system;
- be able to exercise the authority necessary to establish and monitor accountability mechanisms.

The CM believes that specific resources are needed to ensure that equality and anti-discrimination issues are taken into account in a cross-cutting manner. These resources are essential to ensure the impetus for actions at the central level and the monitoring of their application in departments and boroughs. This decision is above all a political choice. It reflects the importance the City places on equality and anti-discrimination issues, and how the City is working towards the goal of substantive equality between women and men and among all women.

#### 2.3.3.2 The CM's Recommendations Concerning the Bureau de l'égalité et de la lutte aux discriminations

• **R35** That the City of Montréal equip itself with concrete means to achieve true equality between women and men and among women by creating a Bureau de l'égalité et de la lutte aux discriminations that has adequate human and financial resources and that reports directly to upper-level management

#### 2.3.4 Ensure the CM's sustainability, independence and resources

The CM is a major ally for the City of Montréal through its research work, knowledge of municipal issues, vision and roots in the feminist community. It helps the City of Montréal identify and understand equality issues and suggest solutions to make Montréal an egalitarian city for all women.

In order to preserve this unique entity, recognized throughout Canada, CM members call on the City of Montréal to ensure its continuity, independence and resources so that the CM can pursue its mission.

#### 2.3.4.1 A unique advisory council

The CM was created in 2004 in response to feminist demands brought forward by Montréal women at the 2002 Montréal Summit. At this forum, individual women of all origins and women's groups spoke out and clearly stated their expectations regarding the status of women in the City of Montréal. A women's delegation submitted important recommendations, some of which were accepted by the municipal government. Demonstrating exemplary leadership, the City of Montréal created the CM and allocated human and material resources dedicated to equality and women's issues.

Over the past 15 years, aided by the expertise and involvement of more than 80 volunteer members, the CM has produced 40 statements, briefs and studies. Unique of its kind, this work combines scientific rigour, partnerships with target populations and groups, and the expertise of Montréal's public service. The CM has provided unprecedented research data and shed light on little-known and undocumented issues, thereby guiding the City's decisions in a rigorous and innovative way.

Thanks to the work of the CM, the City has made great strides towards equality through several key actions such as the production of gender- and category-based data on the Equal Access to Employment Program (EAEP) in human resources reports; the creation of Cité Elles MTL (a simulation city council specifically designed for women); the creation of Place des Montréalaises to pay tribute to the women who participated in the city's development;<sup>165</sup> joining UN Women's "Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces" initiative<sup>166</sup> and the Declaration against Sexual Violence.<sup>167</sup>

For many years, CM members have also raised awareness among elected officials and public servants about systemic discrimination against women and the importance of adopting genderbased analysis plus (GBA+) to combat it. We therefore congratulate the municipal government for its decision in 2018 to implement GBA+ in its policies.<sup>168</sup> We are also pleased that the City is taking into account the recommendations of the brief on non-sexist language<sup>169</sup> to make the City's communications more inclusive of Montréal women.

The CM's structure and governance model is being praised in Montréal, Québec, elsewhere in Canada and internationally. In recent years, the CM has shared its best practices with the City of Laval, which has created a Conseil des Lavalloises<sup>170</sup> based on a model similar to the CM. The Cities of Sherbrooke and Gatineau have also expressed their interest in setting up such a structure and have had discussions with the CM. In addition, in 2018, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conducted a case study on the CM's governance<sup>171</sup> and invited the CM to participate in a pan-Canadian webinar on the same issue. That same year, the CM was invited to participate in the UN Women International Conference in Edmonton to present its views on the safety of cisgender and transgender women in festivals. Finally, it should be noted that the CM is cited in numerous books and research papers with respect to its work and governance. One example is a report published in 2019 for the City for All Women Initiative entitled *Advancing Gender Equality in the City of Ottawa*.<sup>172</sup>

#### 2.3.4.2 Challenges to be met

When the CM was created in 2004, in the wake of public consultations led by the Conseil régional de développement de l'île de Montréal (CRDIM)'s women and regional development committee, <sup>173</sup> it was decided:

- that the CM would report directly to the City Council;
- that there was a desire to make it permanent by enshrining it in the City Charter;
- that its permanence would guarantee its autonomy and independence from municipal governments;
- that members of the CM would be selected by an external and independent committee.

It was also agreed that the CM's primary role and mission would be to advise City Council and the Executive Committee at their request, but also on its own initiative and by any means it deems useful, and to give its opinion and recommendations on any issue that has an impact on the daily lives of Montréal women and City employees.

For many years, the CM has worked closely with the municipal government, both with women elected officials responsible for the status of women and with civil servants responsible for equality issues. The members applaud this constructive collaboration and look forward to its continuation. We therefore want to share certain concerns regarding the sustainability, independence and resources of the CM in order to be able to continue this collaboration under the best conditions.

Members first wish to draw the attention of the municipal government to the fact that sections 83.15 to 83.18 providing for the creation, and various rules governing the operation of the City of Montréal's three advisory councils (Conseil des Montréalaises, Conseil interculturel de Montréal and Conseil jeunesse de Montréal) were deleted from the *Charter of Ville de Montréal* when the City of Montréal was granted the status of metropolis of Québec in 2017. In other words, the sustainability of advisory councils is no longer assured. Elected officials of the City of Montréal may decide to abolish them on their own initiative, whereas this decision previously required the approval of Québec's National Assembly. CM members are very concerned about this and call on the City government to find ways to ensure the sustainability of advisory councils.

Over the years, the CM's reputation and influence has grown and its feminist expertise is now well established. The members of the CM welcome this, but note that the CM is increasingly solicited, as much by community organizations as by academic and governmental institutions. We are also increasingly called upon by the City of Montréal. The CM is a partner in the organization of Cité Elles MTL and participates in various committees (such as those related to the Place des Montréalaises or sexual violence) and activities of the City (Caravan of Democracy). Since 2017, the City has asked the CM to address women's safety during festivals, family-work balance for elected officials, trafficking of women during the Formula One Grand Prix, women's participation in City Council question period, and non-sexist language. Faced with the City administration's increasingly frequent requests for our expertise, CM members emphasize the importance of being able to choose whether or not to respond to them, based on our priorities and timelines, in order to maintain our autonomy and independence and to achieve our primary mission: work on the issues and priorities of women's groups and shed light on the City's blind spots regarding equality between women and men and among all women.

Members also underline the importance of the CM's independence, both politically and administratively, so that it can adequately pursue its mission as a watchdog on the status of women and equality, and maintain a healthy distance from elected officials and City employees. Members urge the City to maintain its best practices: independent political and administrative decision-making processes and offices located outside City Hall and City departments.

The members of the CM are committed to improving the quality of life of Montréal women as well as the working conditions of all women working in the public service. However, in contrast to municipal departments and other democratic structures, the CM's 15 members are volunteers. In addition, the CM has only one part-time secretary (shared with the other two advisory councils) and one staff member, the secretary/researcher, who is responsible for coordination, internal and

external partner relations, research production and communications. Under such conditions, the CM's current human resources are clearly limited and inadequate for the considerable scope and scale of its activities and work.

#### 2.3.4.3 The CM's Recommendations on CM Sustainability, Independence and Resources

- **R36** That the City of Montréal guarantee the CM's continuing operation and sustainability in order to ensure the representation of women (notably through the CM's strong relationships with women's groups) and the CM's expertise within the municipal government.
- **R37** That the City of Montréal guarantee the CM's independence, both administratively and politically.
- **R38** That the City of Montréal recognize the CM's expertise, particularly in producing rigorous data and formulating recommendations that will effectively guide the City's work combating discrimination against Montréal women and City employees.

**R38 a.** That the City of Montréal recognize the CM's expertise by increasing the CM's human and financial resources to enable it to pursue its mission.

**R38 b.** That the City of Montréal create a permanent research coordinator position.

## **3** THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: WOMEN ON THE FRONT LINES

In a paper about women and the COVID-19 pandemic,<sup>174</sup> Louise Cordeau, president of the Conseil du statut de la femme [status of women council whose members are appointed by the Québec government], writes, "Women continue to shoulder the largest share of the work of caring, feeding, cleaning and teaching. This crisis has a major impact on the organization of their work and family responsibilities, in addition to affecting their health. There are many social and economic implications for Québec's care workers." [Translation]

To reduce the impact of this crisis on women and people in vulnerable situations, many women's groups have reorganized their work and are providing new services, and the City of Montréal has put in place several emergency measures. At the same time, women's groups are sounding the alarm to make sure they are consulted and taken into account in government stimulus plans.

#### 3.1 Women, the Pandemic's Primary Victims

Because so many women work in health and social services, women are indeed on the front line in times of pandemic, but all women are affected by this health crisis and the ensuing economic and social crisis. They are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 because of the type of jobs they do and their contact with people who are ill or members of the general public.<sup>175</sup> They are also at increased risk of domestic violence and suffer more anxiety.<sup>176</sup> Their family responsibilities and mental workloads have increased dramatically as they struggle to balance family and work.<sup>177</sup> While their incomes are still lower than those of men, they have experienced more job losses<sup>178</sup> and are therefore more vulnerable to poverty and the risk of homelessness.<sup>179</sup>

These difficulties are exacerbated among Indigenous, immigrant and racialized women and women with disabilities.<sup>180</sup> They are also accentuated for older women living alone, many of whom have little contact with their communities. Older women, who make up the majority of seniors (55% of those aged 65 and over, and 70% of those aged 90-99), are more affected by poverty than men and many experience social isolation, states the Conseil du statut de la femme.<sup>181</sup>

#### 3.2 Women's Groups On the Front Lines

During the health crisis, women's groups have had to adapt to the lockdown and social distancing rules. Many organizations have reorganized their services virtually and have started telephone help lines for listening, psychosocial support, advocacy and referrals. Several have organized virtual drop-in meetings to lessen women's isolation as well as online informational workshops related to the pandemic (multilingual health information, legal clinics, educational resources for children, neighbourhood resources, etc.). Also, several centres have set up emergency food services.

In the spring of 2020, the Canadian Women's Foundation conducted a survey of 500 organizations working with women from every province and territory in the country.<sup>182</sup> Based on the 120 responses collected, the survey found that 67% of the responding organizations had developed new programs and services to meet pandemic needs, and just over half saw a 30% increase in demand for their services. Many organizations have also lost volunteers along the way, not only because of lockdown, but also because their volunteer base consists of people who are retired or disabled. As well, more than half of the responding organizations report being financially precarious, with some reporting that they have had to close their doors and cancel their fundraising campaigns, as individual donors are now turning their attention to emergency services in response to COVID-19. In sum, 82% of the surveyed organizations fear they will have to close their doors.

#### 3.3 The City of Montréal's Emergency Measures

To support citizens in vulnerable situations, the City of Montréal and its related boroughs have put in place several emergency measures that deserve to be highlighted and that the members of the CM recommend be maintained. For example, the City contributed \$1,140,000 to the United Way's Emergency Fund<sup>183</sup> to support community organizations that meet basic needs. Several boroughs distributed food, meals and masks to their residents.

The City set up the Greater Montréal 211 emergency help line,<sup>184</sup> a multilingual social and community referral service, and carried out a campaign to invite people aged 70 and over to stay home and call the 211 line.<sup>185</sup>

Several initiatives for people experiencing homelessness have been implemented, including the opening of drop-in centres and shelters and the requisitioning of four hotels to meet the accommodation needs of people experiencing homelessness.<sup>186</sup>

Finally, the City, assisted by the CM, has widely disseminated the campaigns of SOS violence conjugale and the Alliance des maisons d'hébergement de 2<sup>e</sup> étape to help women and children who are victims of domestic violence.

On the economic front, the City has introduced a series of exceptional measures to support Montréal businesses. It has set up a committee of economic experts, whose report on Montréal's economic recovery under COVID-19 makes 16 recommendations on financial support, labour, business and commerce, transportation and urban planning, cultural industries and tourism.<sup>187</sup> And, in June 2020, it launched an economic recovery plan for Montréal [*Plan de relance économique de Montréal*].<sup>188</sup>

The CM notes that there is no parity on the committee of economic experts and that no partner, expert in equality or women's group, was consulted in drafting the economic recovery plan. It is our fervent hope that women will be taken into account in the realization of this plan.

#### **3.4 Taking Women into Account**

Knowing that women are more affected by the health crisis, several organizations remind us of the importance of having a gender-based and inclusive approach to the pandemic. "The only way to truly ease the disproportionate effects on women is to ensure a GBA+ (gender-based analysis plus or feminist intersectional analysis) is a key part to all initiatives, not only during this pandemic but also as we recover from it," the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW) notes.<sup>189</sup> In this regard, it is important to produce detailed gender-based data to measure the impacts of the pandemic and emergency measures on all women and vulnerable communities, asserts the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ).<sup>190</sup>

In addition, women's groups stress, women must be involved in decision-making. According to UN Women,<sup>191</sup> it is important to "recognize, support and include women's leadership and expertise to better respond to the health, social and economic contexts of the pandemic."

Not only must women be involved in decision-making, but economic recovery must take them into account. This is the message sent in April 2020 to Québec Premier François Legault by more than 1,700 women from all walks of life at the initiative of the Réseau des femmes en environnement [women's network on the environment]. In this letter, the women also asked the government to make sure that sustainable development is part of Québec's economic recovery.<sup>192</sup>

The measures implemented to revive the economy after the financial crisis of 2008-2009 benefited men more than women, according to the Conseil du statut de la femme's report on COVID-19.<sup>193</sup> Hence the importance of applying a GBA+ to the economic stimulus plan so that women are both included in the economic stimulus measures, and prevented from becoming the main victims of future budget cuts.

#### 3.5 The Recommendations of the CM Concerning the City's Actions During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic

• **R39** That the City of Montréal take women into account in its post-COVID-19 recovery plans, both socially and economically as well as in terms of climate change.

**R39 a.** That the City of Montréal involve women and women's groups in decision-making related to the management of the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery plans.

**R39 b.** That the City of Montréal systematically include GBA+ in post-COVID-19 strategies and recovery plans to ensure that all women are taken into account and benefit.

**R39 c.** That the City of Montréal ensure that women's groups receive an equitable share of the budget earmarked for community groups.

- **R40** That the City of Montréal create a new emergency fund for community groups and ensure that women's groups have access to this fund, particularly groups whose mission is to support older women, immigrant and racialized women, Indigenous women and women with disabilities.
- **R41** That the City of Montréal take into account the specific needs of older women in its recovery plans.

**R41 a.** That the City of Montréal implement specific measures for older women in order to support them and reduce their isolation. For example, maintaining the Greater Montréal 211 help line and promoting it to seniors; setting up personalized calls; offering sports, culture and leisure activities for seniors; partnerships with organizations that help seniors.

# Conclusion

## **CONCLUSION**

Our critical analysis of the *Bilan du plan d'action en égalité 2015-2018* and presentation of the CM's vision of an egalitarian city free of discrimination come at an unprecedented moment in Montréal's history, a context that has galvanized our discussions.

The *Bilan du plan d'action en égalité 2015-2018* gives us a good overview of what has been accomplished. Significant progress has been made, but more strategic actions need to be put in place. This requires political will, addressing the multiple forms of systemic discrimination that affect women.

Future social development plans will require prudence. While the CM applauds the City's efforts to mainstream equality in its social development actions, members want to ensure that a specific approach for women and consideration of their various needs remain a priority.

At the same time, CM members reiterate that the principles underlying the new social development action plans must not confine the equality project to the field of social development exclusively. The issues affecting Montréal women are complex, multiple, diverse and fall within all of the City's areas of jurisdiction.

The impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the strong measures taken to curb its spread have highlighted significant social and economic disparities, with disproportionate effects on women—particularly those who are most marginalized. Because of the significant impact on women, it is imperative that women be at the center of recovery efforts.

De facto equality and anti-discrimination measures will only happen if they are integrated at all levels of the City and within each of the boroughs, both in services provided to the public and internally. We believe that for this integration to become a reality, the guiding principles and conditions for success presented in this opinion are essential.

CM members end this statement by reiterating our position. The City must pursue its commitments concerning equality. It has a responsibility to truly meet the needs of all Montréal women and to provide living conditions that ensure them the full enjoyment of their rights.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **1 CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

The recommendations in this section refer to the actions carried out under the Ville de Montréal's action plans.

#### Governance

• **R1** That the City of Montréal ensure that all of its decision-making structures (Executive Committees, standing committees and chairs of standing committees, urban development advisory committees, and boards of directors of agencies connected with the City) reflect Montréal's sociodemographic reality.

**R1 a.** That the City of Montréal achieve, within five years, a 40% to 60% representation of women (a "parity zone") in its decision-making bodies.

**R1 b.** That the City of Montréal set and achieve, within five years, specific representation targets for ethnic and visible minority women, Indigenous people and persons with disabilities in its decision-making bodies.

- **R2** That the City of Montréal annually organize Cité Elles MTL to support the presence of women in politics, allocate the necessary resources and ensure its sustainability from year to year.
- **R3** That the City of Montréal undertake to formalize all the practices supporting family-work balance for elected officialsand introduce standardized and transparent practices.
- **R4** That the City of Montréal commit to applying the measures presented in the MTElles (a women's civic participation project) toolkit for equal and inclusive participation for all women.

#### The City, as an employer

• **R5** That the City of Montréal ensure that the objectives set by the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (CDPDJ) for the five groups targeted under the EAEP are met, in all employment categories, in the central city and in the boroughs.

**R5 a.** That the City of Montréal ensure that the objectives set for women are met and pay special attention to job categories where they are few in number (blue-collar workers, police officers, firefighters, scientific professionals).

**R5 b.** That the City of Montréal ensure that between 40% and 60% (the "parity zone") of Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities and persons from visible and ethnic minorities employed by the City, in all job categories, are women.

**R5 c.** That the City of Montréal ensure that it reaches between 40% and 60% (the "parity zone") of women in its specific programs in the next strategy for diversity, equity and inclusion in employment [*Stratégie pour la diversité, l'équité et l'inclusion en emploi*] (targeting Indigenous employees or individuals, people with disabilities, and people from visible and ethnic minorities).

- **R6** That the City of Montréal develop and adopt an official family-work balance (FWB) policy that applies to all staff in all its departments and boroughs, while taking into account specific job category needs (e.g. blue-collar schedules).
- **R7** That the City of Montréal provide GBA+ training to all human resources staff and that it apply this analysis to its recruitment processes, programs, projects, policies and human resources plans in order to take into account all women with regard to employment.

#### Services for women

#### **Safety**

• **R8** That the City of Montréal implement actions related to UN Women's "Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces" program, which it endorsed in 2019.

**R8 a.** That the Ville de Montréal devote financial resources to implement these actions.

**R8 b.** That the Ville de Montréal implement these actions in collaboration with women's groups specializing in women's safety issues in public spaces, as well as with the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) and the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) for actions within their fields of competence.

• **R9** That the Ville de Montréal update the *Guide d'aménagement pour un environnement urbain sécuritaire* using an intersectional perspective to address women's safety in public spaces.

**R9 a.** That the Ville de Montréal mandate the Service de l'urbanisme et de la mobilité (SUM) to redesign the Guide, in collaboration with the Service de la diversité et de l'inclusion sociale (SDIS) and women's groups specializing in women's safety issues in public spaces.

**R9 b.** That the Ville de Montréal promote the Guide so that it can be implemented in the central city and all boroughs.

#### Housing

• R10 That the City of Montréal adopt a housing strategy that recognizes the right to housing.<sup>194</sup>

**R10 a.** That the housing supply resulting from this strategy be accessible to all women.

**R10 b.** That this strategy be based on a GBA+ to address the barriers women face and to take into account their specific needs.

• R11 That the Ville de Montréal improve its social housing supply.

**R11 a.** That the City of Montréal amend its *Règlement pour une métropole mixte* to increase its objectives for the inclusion of social housing, with a minimum proportion of 40%, with the aim of truly meeting the needs of tenant households, rather than just assigning 20% to social housing and 20% to affordable housing.

**R11 b.** That the Ville de Montréal commit to setting aside a percentage of social and community housing units for women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, women with disabilities and Indigenous women.

**R11 c.** That the Ville de Montréal recognize the right to housing for people without status or with precarious status. To this end, that it abolish, as recommended by the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM), the clause imposed by the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) in its AccèsLogis Montréal program that restricts access to social and community housing to people with citizen or permanent resident status.<sup>195</sup>

**R11 d.** That the Ville de Montréal develop an action plan to ensure that all social and community housing is universally accessible.

• **R12** That the Ville de Montréal implement measures to combat harassment and all other forms of violence experienced by women in their housing, whether social, community or private.

#### Fighting poverty and social exclusion

- **R13** That the Ville de Montréal provide substantial and recurrent financial support to women's groups and organizations that help women who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- **R14** That the Ville de Montréal take into account the hidden homelessness of women in its enumeration. To do so, that it applies GBA+ and adopts diversified methods to ensure the collection of specific data on all homeless women (immigrant, refugee and non-status women; Indigenous women; women with disabilities; 2ELGBTQQIA<sup>196</sup> and older women).
- **R15** That the Ville de Montréal take into account the specific needs of Indigenous women in the design, implementation and evaluation of the *Stratégie de réconciliation avec les peuples autochtones.*

#### Presence of Montréal women on the international scene

- **R16** That the City of Montréal ensure a 40% to 60% representation of women (the "parity zone") among its representatives, including civil servants and elected officials, and for missions and projects abroad.
- **R17** That the City of Montréal ensure that the principle of equality between women and men and among all women will be systematically integrated into the international cooperation missions and projects that it supports and supervises. That it participate in equality work in international associations such as Metropolis and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) of which it is a member.

#### 2 THE CM'S VISION OF A FEMINIST CITY, FREE OF DISCRIMINATION

The recommendations in this section concern structural changes that the CM would like the City to implement with a view to moving toward de facto equality between women and men and among all women.

#### **Right to the city**

• **R18** That the City of Montréal systematically integrate GBA+ into municipal plans, strategies and work sites, including action plans on economic development, climate plan, urban planning, universal access work site, strategy for reconciliation with Indigenous people, housing strategy, procurement strategy, public participation and citizen engagement policy.

#### **Public transit**

- **R19** That the City of Montréal continue to promote social public transit fares with a view to fighting poverty and social exclusion.
- **R20** That the City of Montréal work in partnership with all concerned organizations and authorities with a view to implementing measures to meet the needs of women with disabilities in terms of adapted and public transit.
- **R21** That the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) take into account the needs of all women in redesigning the bus system.
- **R22** That the STM ensure the implementation of measures favouring the participation of women in its public consultations.
- **R23** That the STM and the City of Montréal ensure that the principles of the *Guide d'aménagement pour un environnement urbain sécuritaire* are systematically applied in and around Metro and commuter train stations, around major boarding points on the public transit network and at pedestrian links giving access to the network.

#### **Fighting discrimination**

- **R24** That the City of Montréal recognize the historical, social and economic existence of discrimination based on sex as well as on the 13 other grounds of discrimination invoked by the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.*
- **R25** That the City of Montréal provide mandatory training to the entire municipal civil service (employees, professionals, managers) and to the staff of paramunicipal corporations on sexism and all forms of systemic discrimination (racism, racism, ageism, etc.), while ensuring that this training is based on GBA+ and carried out in collaboration with community organizations involved in the fight against such discrimination, as recommended by the OCPM.<sup>197</sup>

• **R26** That the City of Montréal ensure that the City's employees and elected officials are representative of the population of Montréal.

**R26 a.** That the City of Montréal ensure that human resources employees, managers and senior management, who play a significant role in recruitment, are representative of the Montréal population.

#### **Recognizing women as agents of change**

• **R27** That the City of Montréal recognize women's contribution to Montréal's history and development by giving them greater prominence in the development of its memorial policies (toponymy, commemorations, historical signage, cultural activities and sites, etc.).

**R27 a.** That the City of Montréal recognize the contribution of Indigenous women and immigrant and/or racialized women to the history and development of Montréal.

• **R28** That the City of Montréal recognize the expertise of women's groups and support their intervention capacity.

**R28 a.** That the City of Montréal adopt mechanisms to allow for a substantial, sustainable and predictable increase in core funding to ensure essential services for women.

**R28 b.** That the City of Montréal provide a per diem and reasonable time prior to consultations to encourage and support the participation of women's groups consulted by the City in the development of orientations, programs and policies (e.g. public consultations, working committees, municipal projects, etc.).

**R28 c.** That the City of Montréal ensure that it consults and works in partnership with women's groups in the development and monitoring of equality policies, plans and actions.

• **R29** That the City of Montréal conceives of de facto equality between women and men and among all women as an important driver of economic development.

**R29 a.** That the City of Montréal ensure that studies and statistics on Montréal's economic situation include differentiated and cross-referenced data.

**R29 b.** That the City of Montréal ensure that all women are considered drivers of economic development and that it take all women into account in each of its economic development action plans.

**R29 c.** That the City of Montréal include terms and conditions on equality between women and men and among all women in the award criteria for all economic development projects that it subsidizes and in contracts to businesses registered in its supplier registry—particularly businesses that carry out infrastructure projects. For example, these criteria could take into account the percentage of women sitting on a company's board of directors, the percentage of women employees, compliance with pay equity obligations, etc.

**R29 d.** That the City of Montréal provide GBA+ training and support to economic development and procurement department staff.

#### The City's responsibility

- **R30** That the City of Montréal set up a committee to monitor the implementation of social development plans, that this committee be parity-based and that it include elected officials, civil servants from several departments and boroughs as well as community partners working with women.
- **R31** That the City of Montréal develop monitoring and evaluation indicators, in collaboration with experts in each sector and community partners, for each of the measures in the social development action plans.
- **R32** That the boroughs of the City of Montréal develop and adopt local action plans promoting equality between women and men and among all women, that these action plans put forward commitments and define concrete measures in the areas of action boroughs have identified as priorities.

**R32 a.** That each borough of the City of Montréal assign one employee and one elected official to be responsible for implementing the local equality action plan. These people will contribute to equality accountability by working closely with the diversity and social inclusion service [Service de la diversité et de l'inclusion sociale (SDIS)], which monitors equality policy at the central level.

**R32 b.** That the City of Montréal identify and disseminate the boroughs' promising practices in terms of equality between women and men and among all women.

#### GBA+

• **R33** That the City of Montréal adopt an action plan (with targets, budget, progress indicators and timetable) for the implementation of GBA+ in all action plans, policies, programs, projects and budgets of the central city and the boroughs.

**R33 a.** That the City of Montréal include in project schedules the time required to complete a GBA+.

**R33 b.** That the City of Montréal devote a percentage of each project's budget to GBA+.

**R33 c.** That the City of Montréal produce and make public differentiated and cross-tabulated population data.

**R33 d.** That the City of Montréal develop an accountability system (with assigned managers) on the integration of GBA+ in the projects of the departments and boroughs.

• **R34** That the City of Montréal consolidate its knowledge of GBA+ and its in-house expertise in the field.

**R34 a.** That the City of Montréal train a critical mass of civil servants and all upper-level management and elected officials on GBA+ (training must be mandatory, offered on an ongoing basis and adapted to each department).

**R34 b.** That the City of Montréal develop in-house expertise in GBA+ (with, for example, resource people in each department and borough, experts to accompany the implementation of GBA+, guides on GBA+ specific to each department, centralized documentation of examples of application of GBA+ in the City, and a GBA+ community of practice).

**R34 c.** That the City of Montréal develop and widely disseminate an internal and external communication plan on the implementation of GBA+.

#### The Bureau de l'égalité et de la lutte contre les descriminations [Equality and Anti-Discrimination Office]

• **R35** That the City of Montréal equip itself with concrete means to achieve true equality between women and men and among women by creating a Bureau de l'égalité et de la lutte aux discriminations that has adequate human and financial resources and that reports directly to upper-level management.

#### The CM's sustainability, independence and resources

- **R36** That the City of Montréal guarantee the CM's continuing operation and sustainability in order to ensure the representation of women (notably through the CM's strong relationships with women's groups) and the CM's expertise within the municipal government.
- **R37** That the City of Montréal guarantee the CM's independence, both administratively and politically.
- **R38** That the City of Montréal recognize the CM's expertise, particularly in producing rigorous data and formulating recommendations that will effectively guide the City's work combating discrimination against Montréal women and City employees.

**R38 a.** That the City of Montréal recognize the CM's expertise by increasing the CM's human and financial resources to enable it to pursue its mission.

**R38 b.** That the City of Montréal create a permanent research coordinator position.

#### **3 THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: WOMEN ON THE FRONT LINES**

These recommendations concern the City's COVID-19 pandemic recovery plans.

#### The city's actions during and after the COVID-19 pandemic

• **R39** That the City of Montréal take women into account in its post-COVID-19 recovery plans, both socially and economically as well as in terms of climate change.

**R39 a.** That the City of Montréal involve women and women's groups in decision-making related to the management of the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery plans.

**R39 b.** That the City of Montréal systematically include GBA+ in post-COVID-19 strategies and recovery plans to ensure that all women are taken into account and benefit.

**R39 c.** That the City of Montréal ensure that women's groups receive an equitable share of the budget earmarked for community groups.

- **R40** That the City of Montréal create a new emergency fund for community groups and ensure that women's groups have access to this fund, particularly groups whose mission is to support older women, immigrant and racialized women, Indigenous women and women with disabilities.
- **R41** That the City of Montréal take into account the specific needs of older women in its recovery plans.

**R41 a.** That the City of Montréal implement specific measures for older women in order to support them and reduce their isolation. For example, maintaining the Greater Montréal 211 help line and promoting it to seniors; setting up personalized calls; offering sports, culture and leisure activities for seniors; partnerships with organizations that help seniors.

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