

Representatives from Youth Summit 2000 Should Allow for Participation from All Youth Groups: AQ Youth

MONTREAL, Friday, October 22, 1999 - The Provincial Youth Commission of Alliance Quebec is dismayed by the latest setback to full participation of minority groups at the upcoming Sommet de Québec et de la jeunesse.

“The process of consultation appears to be artificial, ad hoc and not at all accommodating to minority youth,” said Marni Fishko, interim co-president of the Provincial Youth Commission. “We were promised a meeting with the co-presidents of the summit. But now the *Bureau du Sommet* is making it very difficult to set up this meeting.”

On September 27, 1999, the Provincial Youth Commission organized an information session on the Summit in order to act as a conduit for information to various minority groups.

“We salute Alliance Quebec’s Provincial Youth Commission initiative”, said a representative of Couleurs Québec, one of several organizations that attended the September 27th minority youth event. “The information session on the Sommet showed us at what point minority youth are concerned by their future and want to express themselves in a democratic environment ”

Some of the minority youth groups present expressed concern as to whether their issues would be brought to the attention of the Minister of Education, or simply forgotten.

"Outaouais youth are in a unique position”, said Peter Griffin, executive member of the Outaouais Alliance Youth Commission. “We have a major youth exodus taking place in our region and lack adequate quality English-language education that does not even exist here at the college level."

The political attaché of the Minister of Education and Youth and an employee of the *Bureau du Sommet* spoke to representatives of almost a dozen groups. It was at that time that a follow-up meeting with the same group of minority organizations was promised. But now, Summit officials are attempting to free themselves from the promised second meeting.

“First, they said that the Summit co-presidents would only meet with the Youth Commission but not the other groups,” Fishko said. “Then they said they would only

meet the Youth Commission in the late morning, when most board members of our volunteer organization are in class or at work.

“This latest setback to minority participation at the summit further reinforces the feeling of exclusion that minority youth groups feel,” Fishko said. “Clearly the process needs to be reexamined to allow for meetings with representatives from all Quebec youth groups.”