



Thursday October 5 2006

Hon. Peter MacKay
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister MacKay,

On behalf of the President, Board of Governors, and membership of the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA), I am writing to express our collective concern over recent budget reductions to the public diplomacy program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT).

The CCA notes, with great disappointment, news of the \$11.9 million reduction in discretionary spending to DFAIT's public diplomacy program announced as part of the \$1 billion reallocation exercise this past September 25. The CCA is appealing to you and your colleagues to reinstate this funding as soon as possible as the first step in a broader strategy, which will acknowledge the critical role Canada's arts and culture play in our evolving international policy.

When I corresponded with you on February 9 earlier this year, I mentioned the importance that the arts and culture sector places on its ability to work with your Department in the promotion of Canadian artistic and cultural expression on the world stage. In your response, dated February 26, you indicated that "Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) has an important mandate to promote Canadian arts and culture abroad. FAC has a program of grants in support of international touring that is important to this community. Its missions abroad also receive great value from visiting Canadian cultural representatives in the various cultural disciplines as an integral component of our public diplomacy strategy. In this context, I would like to meet with you, after the new government has settled in, to discuss the role of FAC in the promotion of the arts overseas."

Given the serious nature of the budgetary reductions announced last week, I would hope that you would agree that a discussion on the role of public diplomacy and the support of the federal government for arts and culture's important place in public diplomacy is extremely timely. I therefore request that we find a mutually convenient time to have a constructive discussion about the future of the public diplomacy program, and begin to

develop new strategies to support the important work that is being done internationally by Canada's arts and culture sector.

My office will be in touch with your staff in the coming weeks to identify an early opportunity for this overdue discussion. On behalf of the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) I would like to wish you a restful Thanksgiving break, and I look forward to our imminent discussion on this important and timely issue.

Yours sincerely,



Alain Pineau
National Director

c.c. Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada
Hon. James Flaherty, Minister of Finance
Deepak Obhrai, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Kevin Sorenson, Chair, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development
Keith Martin, Foreign Affairs Critic, Liberal Party
Vivian Barbot, Assistant Foreign Affairs Critic, Bloc Quebecois
Alexa McDonough, Foreign Affairs Critic, NDP