



Ottawa, February 8, 2007

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

Dear Minister,

You may have noticed the clamour that has emerged recently from the arts and culture sector regarding the Government's September 25 reallocation cuts to the public diplomacy program in your department. The CCA, as the oldest and largest arts umbrella organization in Canada, has taken a number of steps to set the record straight.

I have attached two bulletins that the CCA has issued on the topic over the past few months. While the CCA's bulletins reach a large audience across Canada, it is clear that in the absence of a clear statement of intent from you or your officials, there will continue to be a stream of objections to fill the gap.

The CCA disagrees with these cuts, though it understands the background for them, and has offered, through written correspondence with your office this past October and earlier in the year, to work with you and your officials to develop a new approach to public diplomacy as a key element of Canada's foreign policy.

It is truly unfortunate that these spending reductions have already had an impact on the cultural programming and activities at our missions and posts abroad, including some of Canada's priority countries in terms of international relations.

The CCA wishes to renew our offer of assistance in addressing this situation in a constructive a manner. The kind of reactions you have no doubt seen in recent weeks will only escalate without a clear signal from you or your department about the future of public diplomacy. Such a statement could indicate that you are in consultation with organizations like the CCA to explore possible new approaches for the public diplomacy issue both for Canadian artists and for your staff at missions and posts around the world.

On behalf of the President and the Board of Governors of the CCA, I earnestly renew our offer of assistance and hope that this situation can be redressed in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Alain Pineau
National Director
Canadian Conference of the Arts

cc. Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada
Hon. Bev Oda, Minister of Canadian Heritage