

August 19, 2008

Mr. Kevin Sorenson, M.P.
Chairman
Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Chairman Sorenson,

On behalf of the President and the Board of Governors of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, I am writing to bring your attention the recent cancellation of the PromArts program at the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The Department of Foreign Affairs has announced the cancellation of this important program at the end of the current fiscal year. This program has been an important instrument in the support of Canadian artists, creators and arts professionals who have worked to develop international audiences and markets for Canadian cultural goods and services. It has allowed our most celebrated artists to participate in conferences, international events and to attend ceremonies honouring their achievements around the world.

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs routinely calls the Minister of Foreign Affairs and senior departmental officials to review the annual Main Estimates of the Department and other matters of consequence to the mandate of your Committee. The CCA would like to suggest that the Committee call before the Minister of Foreign Affairs to explain the rationale for this cancellation and the vision for public diplomacy being developed by the Department.

The Standing Committee would do a great service to those of us who attach great importance to such questions and programs. It would be our hope that the Committee could convene such a session as early as possible in the Fall session of Parliament.

A clear and frank discussion with the Minister would hopefully provide insight into the thinking of the Minister and the vision for the role of the arts in public diplomacy in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alain Pineau', with a stylized, cursive script.

Alain Pineau
National Director