

Montréal, April 8, 2008
Telefilm Canada Annual General Meeting
Cinémathèque québécoise

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

I am very proud to represent Telefilm Canada on the occasion of our organization's first annual general meeting. The Government now requires that Crown Corporations hold such meetings, and both Wayne Clarkson, our Executive Director, and I are delighted to be here today.

We want to be able to speak to as many of our fellow citizens as possible, no matter where they may be across the country. Our wish is to engage in an open, transparent and stimulating dialogue with you, and, we hope, with many others through our website.

This very first annual general meeting couldn't come at a better time. To begin with, Telefilm, which marked its 40th anniversary not too long ago, has a rich history and a wealth of expertise. In addition, our Board of Directors has been significantly renewed over the past year, and it ensures that the funds we have at our disposal, allocated to us by Parliament, by the Department of Canadian Heritage and by other agencies, are managed as effectively and as efficiently as possible.

I should also add that we are starting the 2009-2010 fiscal year, not only with a new corporate plan to guide us, with new wind in our sails.

So we have a lot to tell you about Telefilm, a Crown Corporation that reports to the Department of Canadian Heritage and whose mandate it is to foster and encourage the development of Canada's audiovisual industry, including feature film, television, and interactive digital media.

To put it simply, Telefilm Canada is the Government's financial instrument of choice for supporting the ideas and imagination of Canada's creative artists: our writers and directors, as well as our producers, distributors, technicians, actors, exporters, exhibitors and festival organizers—in short, all of those who form the links in the chain that unites works of the imagination with their audiences.

In round numbers, Telefilm administers programs worth \$400 million annually. You'd be right to think that a responsibility of this kind requires exemplary governance. These are public and private funds, for which we must answer, not only to the Government, but to the industry and to all citizens of Canada.

Over the course of my first year as Telefilm Chair, I focused a good part of my attention on setting up and guiding a new, solid Board of Directors, whose members' complementary areas of expertise tie in with Telefilm's main fields of activity. Our Board also represents all regions of the country.

We can now say that Telefilm is supported by a Board comprised of people who are not only highly skilled and competent, but who are particularly keen to put their wide-ranging expertise at the service of Telefilm's best interests. And they do so with a great deal of enthusiasm and generosity. New appointments by the Governor in Council have allowed us, over the past year, to relaunch the Audit and Finance Committee, which plays a vital role in a funding organization such as ours, and to set up a new Governance Committee.

I am indeed very proud to introduce the Board members who are here with us today.

Let me begin by introducing the Vice-Chair of the Board, a Toronto lawyer and a person who is passionate about intellectual property law as much as she is about digital media and knowledge management systems: **Ms. Elise Orenstein**.

The Chair of our new Nominating, Evaluation and Governance Committee is also a lawyer, this time from Halifax. He is a Partner with the firm of Stewart McKelvey, where his practice focuses on workplace litigation, dispute resolution, human rights, and employer–employee relations: please welcome **Mr. Grant Machum**.

A communications expert, she is Managing Partner of Bridge Communications in Vancouver, a firm that specializes in marketing, strategic planning, public relations, and advertising. Appointed to Telefilm’s Board only a few months ago, she has already organized two meetings, in our Vancouver office, between representatives of B.C.’s audiovisual industry and the Minister of Canadian Heritage, James Moore: let me introduce **Ms. Marlie Oden**.

A fervent advocate of groundbreaking and socially engaged independent cinema, he enjoyed a prestigious career in the Canadian film industry. He currently serves as Government Film Commissioner and Chair of the National Film Board of Canada: **Mr. Tom Perlmutter**.

And, finally, the only Board member who was unable to be with us today. He is a chartered accountant who headed a major office of the Mallette firm for more than 25 years. He chairs the Audit and Finance Committee, which helps the Board analyze and approve Telefilm’s financial information, report-production systems and internal control systems, as well as internal and external audit reports: **Mr. Yvon Bélanger**.

This valiant group has several irons in the fire at the moment.

First, the Board is seeing to it that the organization has all the means it needs to achieve its five-year plan for 2006-2011.

The Board is also acutely aware of the necessity of having partnerships and substantial foreign investment in Canadian productions. Although geographically vast, our country has a relatively modest domestic market and funding sources are limited. Fortunately, co-production is embedded in the DNA of Canadians, as it were. After experiencing a few difficult years, owing to realignments on the international scene—such as the European Union’s huge market and the emergence of new co-producing countries—we are once again making headway and the future looks promising.

Indeed, almost a quarter of the funds available under the Canada Feature Film Fund currently supports co-production projects. It shouldn’t take much, therefore, to set up a formal structure to manage this funding method, which would increase the likelihood of attracting private investment in co-production—in combination with public funding. At the same time, private investment in co-production would guarantee access to much larger markets.

I mentioned earlier that we would be starting this new fiscal year with new wind in our sails. Indeed, our Executive Director will announce, in coming days, major **organizational changes to Telefilm’s senior management level**. The main benefit of these changes is that they will bring the Executive Director closer to front-line operations by eliminating a complete decision-making level that reports directly to him and by broadening the membership of his Management Committee. I think it’s worth adding that these changes, which will also improve the flow of information within Telefilm and strengthen our ties with the Department of Canadian Heritage and with our clients in the industry, were developed by the Board and senior management working together in perfect harmony.

Also, an internal working group is currently looking at the organization's **corporate values** in the aim of bringing them up to date. Employees were very closely involved in this initiative, the results of which will be made public shortly.

Finally, Telefilm will soon undertake a thorough review of its **corporate branding** and give itself a new **corporate signature**, consisting of a rejuvenated logo and a tag line that will not only speak with a unifying voice but which could truly engage our clients around creative and innovative projects.

In the matter of interactive digital media, Telefilm welcomed Minister Moore's announcement regarding the creation of the Canada Media Fund (CMF), born of a merger between the Canadian Television Fund and the Canada New Media Fund, both of which will continue to receive Government funding. Telefilm is now laying the groundwork for its negotiations with the CMF's new Board regarding the service agreement between our two organizations. The negotiations will likely begin this summer. Under this agreement, Telefilm would act as administrator of the new fund, starting in April 2010.

In this current economic climate, it is essential that organizations such as ours—*public* organizations—carefully examine, to the extent their incorporation Acts allow, all avenues that will enable them to make the most of the financial and human resources available to them. Public organizations need to be more proactive and must explore all sources of public and private funding that can be put to good use.

But this exploratory thrust must not divert our attention away from our primary mission, the fundamental reason for our existence. Our mission is to provide sound management of the funds put at our disposal to foster and encourage the development of Canada's audiovisual industry.

On this point, I should note that the task of selecting projects submitted to Telefilm for funding is without a doubt one of our organization's heaviest responsibilities. We take this role very seriously and are especially proud of the decision-making process we've put in place, which is founded on principles of integrity and probity.

The process is fair, it is transparent, it is tested and, I would add, it is accountable. It is overseen by employees who, like all Telefilm employees, have a thorough knowledge of the audiovisual industry and are deeply involved in its development and promotion. Our decision-making process allows the Corporation to make the best choices possible in order to attract Canadian and international audiences with varied, high-quality works.

Canada's audiovisual industry is producing more and more high-quality, world-class work. We at Telefilm Canada are very proud—as indeed all Canadians should be proud—of filmmakers such as Denys Arcand, Lyne Charlebois, David Cronenberg, Paul Gross, Deepa Mehta, Michael McGowan, Benoit Pilon, Sarah Polley, Léa Pool, Denis Villeneuve (to name but a few). Several of them were honoured at the most recent Genie and Jutra awards, and represent us so gloriously on the international scene.

This is what we can do together!