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**Annual Public Assembly 2022-2023**

**Speech by  
Robert Spickler  
Chair of the Board**

**Online – Zoom Meeting  
November 15, 2023**

**(Check against delivery)**

Good afternoon everyone,

Welcome to Telefilm Canada's 2023 Annual Public Assembly. Today we will report on our key activities and accomplishments during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

To continue to connect with people from coast to coast to coast and ensure greater accessibility we have chosen to hold our meeting online once again.

So, thank you for being here with us.

For the benefit of visually impaired people attending this meeting, (Mr. Spickler to describe himself).

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The past year has been busy and productive for Telefilm.

First, we had the pleasure of welcoming Julie Roy as Telefilm's new Executive Director and CEO. Julie has extensive experience in the Canadian film industry. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to assure her of our full support as she carries out her mandate.

I also want to thank Francesca Accinelli, who served with passion and conviction as Telefilm's interim director for more

than six months. Her efforts during that time contributed substantially to achieving our objectives.

For the industry, 2022-23 was marked by a return to normalcy after years of pandemic disruption.

Movie lovers returned to theatres and festivals of all sorts were able to welcome audiences again.

However, if our industry was able to recover so quickly, it was in large part due to the additional funds provided by the Department of Canadian Heritage. This funding enabled Telefilm to increase and extend its support for stakeholders throughout the Canadian film sector.

For this reason, I want to express our deep appreciation to the Government of Canada for its sustained and increased support for the audiovisual community over the past years. At the same time, I want to congratulate the new Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Honourable Pascale St-Onge, and assure her of our unreserved cooperation.

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Ensuring the continuity of Telefilm's additional funding remains a top priority.

As Telefilm embarks on a strategic planning process, it is of utmost importance to envision its future role.

To effectively fulfill its mission of developing, financing and promoting Canadian cinema in collaboration with the industry, Telefilm must have the necessary means to continue championing the audiovisual sector.

**The fact is, we are in a critical moment.**

With the implementation of Telefilm's strategic plan **for the next three years** and to maintain all of its existing programs, there is an urgency to receive the renewal of the government grant that was provided to us since 2021.

We look to the Department of Canadian Heritage with great anticipation and hope, as Telefilm works closely with them on this urgent priority.

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The cinema and Canadian films drive our work at Telefilm.

As I mentioned earlier, we saw an increase in movie theatre attendance, and festivals have returned to their usual rhythm.

While this is much welcomed news, there is still a need to urge local, regional and national broadcasters and cinemas to give Canadian films a greater pride of place.

We have strong Canadian films and stories that should be seen.

In this regard, I want to commend the work of the Canadian filmmakers, producers and craftspeople who make our cinema shine at home and abroad. And who, in recent years, have had to work in particularly difficult conditions due to the pandemic.

And to highlight the emerging creators, Telefilm is proud to play a key role in the start of their filmmaking career. I cannot overstate the importance of the Talent to Watch Program, which supports filmmakers in bringing a first feature to screen and provides them with an invaluable springboard. To name just a few recent works, I congratulate Zarrar Khan for IN FLAMES, which was featured at the Cannes Festival and at TIFF.

Je félicite Kevin T. Landry pour son film JOUR DE MERDE, lauréat du prix Gilles Carles des Rendez-vous Québec Cinéma.

I also congratulate Graham Foy whose film THE MAIDEN premiered at the Venice Film Festival, et je félicite enfin Fanie Pelletier dont le film JOUVENCELLES a été présenté au Festival international du film documentaire de Ji.hlava en République Czech.

In closing, I want to thank the members of Telefilm's Board of Directors – Angèle Beausoleil, Karen Horcher, Emmanuelle Létourneau, Sean Ponnambalam and Etoile Stewart – for their commitment and steadfast availability. I also want to thank Claude Joli-Cœur, whose term ended this year, and to welcome Suzanne Guèvremont, Government Film Commissioner and Chair of the National Film Board, who has joined our Board.

Finally, in the coming months, my term as Chair of Telefilm's Board will be coming to an end.

What will stay with me from these past five fairly tumultuous years is how the enthusiasm, dedication and expertise of the Telefilm Canada team ensure that Canadian filmmakers benefit from an attentive presence eager to promote our national cinema.

Thank you all for your attention.

I now turn the floor over to Julie Roy, Executive Director and CEO.