



# Annual Public Assembly 2023-2024

Speech by

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Thank you, Sylvain.

## **Introduction**

Welcome everyone to Telefilm Canada's Annual Public Meeting.

I will start by describing myself for those who cannot see me.

I am a middle-aged woman with curly blonde hair and blue eyes, wearing a blue dress, and I am sitting in a movie theatre.

It's a pleasure to speak to you today.

I welcome your questions in the comment section, as my team is currently available to answer them live.

I also invite you to read our recent 2023-24 Annual Report available on our website for detailed information on what I'll be talking about.

## **Telefilm's Mission**

I'm speaking to you today to review the past fiscal year.

It's been my first year as Executive Director and CEO of Telefilm Canada.

An intense year, at an important time.

At a time when our industry is mobilizing to meet major challenges.

We are at a transformative moment.

And it is against this backdrop that my management team and I have made it a strategic priority to re-evaluate Telefilm's programs.

Why did we do this?

Because we listened to your concerns and needs...

along with our partners, sister agencies, associations, our collaborators.

And how are we going to achieve this?

By working with our partners, participating in important discussions and exchanging ideas.

The mission of Telefilm hasn't changed.

Our goal is ALWAYS to provide impactful and sustainable support for the economic prosperity and cultural importance of Canadian and Indigenous cinema and make it shine.

But it is **how** we get there that is going to change.

And so, we have developed a three-year Strategic Plan.

An ambitious plan that will enable us to adapt to the profound changes taking place in the audiovisual industry.

We have a **responsibility** to ensure that our investment reaches every point of contact in the value chain.

We are going to continue to meet the new realities of our industry, including A.I.

We will maintain Telefilm's role as an impactful partner of choice.

And I can tell you this...

In all those conversations I had, one thing is **clear**.

Our industry is made up of passionate creators and we all rally behind what we like to call the **unifying power of cinema**.

**Our** cinema.

The diverse voices across this country.

Voices that, despite their sometimes-different realities, are united by this conviction.

I share it, too. I have my whole career. It's been 30 years since.

This commitment to our cinema is truly at the **core** of all the relationships Telefilm has with partners and audiences... at home and on the international scene.

## **Strategic Vision**

So, what is the vision? And what did we achieve in fiscal 2023-24?

First of all, to streamline our activities and align more closely with our strategic vision, we began by implementing various internal reorganizations by regrouping certain sectors.

For example, Finance and IT are under one Vice President.

We also brought our Government Relations and Communications under one team.

One major change is that our core activities have been brought into a single portfolio of Program Strategy and Industry Development, to maximize efficiency and impact.

And finally, ESG and sustainability practices have been expanded and integrated across the organization.

### **Continuum**

This brings me to my next point of discussion – our programs... which is at the heart of how we achieve our mission.

When we began examining our programs, we looked closely at the ecosystem of the audiovisual sector.

It is complex and interconnected.

We know that a production's life cycle has many stages – with specific needs and challenges.

To us that means many opportunities for support.

We call this the **continuum** of the film industry. In fact, it's the entire value chain –

from pre-development to development,

from production to post-production

from national distribution to international.

And it is here - at these contact points - that Telefilm provides funding programs.

Our approach is holistic... considering all the aspects of our industry where our partners play a crucial role in ensuring that our stories and our creators shine.

As we stand on the threshold of a new fiscal year, we launched our 2024-27 Strategic Plan: **Together, for a lasting impact.**

### **2023-24 Highlights**

I'd like to take a moment now to recap some of the highlights from last year.

To begin, I want to point out that the year 2023-24 was the third and final year of integration of additional funding from the 2021 federal budget.

And our funding was put to **very effective use.**

In all, Telefilm's programs and activities funneled nearly a hundred and thirty-nine million dollars into the creative economy.

Over eighty-four million dollars was invested in 141 feature film projects in production!

And this year was a special one for documentaries.

Over seven million dollars went into theatrical documentaries.

This is the **highest level** of support in Telefilm's Theatrical Documentary Program in **ten years**.

In part, this is because over two million dollars was re-allocated to bolster documentaries at a time when strikes by the American unions and guilds paralyzed many productions.

Not only that, but new guidelines also allowed for greater financial participation per documentary.

Truly, Canadian documentaries continue to stand out!

Earlier this year, we were delighted to celebrate the success of Nisha Pahuja's ***To Kill A Tiger***.

Which earned a prestigious Oscar nomination for Best Documentary!

In our Development Program, we invested close to twelve million dollars in over three hundred projects.

In the area of promotional support, over thirty-two million dollars went into over a hundred Canadian film festivals, on top of that, over a hundred-and-ten international festivals and industry activities received funding.

Meanwhile, our Marketing and Audience Engagement Initiative received over six million dollars more than the prior year, which led to the support of ninety-five Canadian feature films.

This is because more films had theatrical releases in 2023-24 – an increase since the pandemic years.

We also observed that our 2023-24 marketing campaigns were more robust in scale than in the previous year.

It is **significant to note** that Telefilm financed close to five million dollars to help market **10** big-budget feature films last fiscal.

### **Fueling the Creative Economy**

As you can see, we have truly made significant investments.

So, what exactly do these investments mean?

It means the **creation of jobs**.

In 2022-23, Canadian screen-based content production generated nearly **two-hundred and forty-thousand jobs**.

Jobs are created at every point on that continuum I have spoken about.

This is why our structure of investing at each critical stage of a project's journey has an **impact**.

An *economic* impact, as well as an impact on our culture and outreach.



To name just a few examples....

Monica Chokri's ***Simple comme Sylvain*** won Best Foreign Film at the César Awards in France.

Cody Lightning's ***Hey Viktor!*** was nominated for 3 Canadian Screen Awards.

And Zarrar Kahn's ***In Flames*** made its world debut in Cannes!

Of course, there are many other examples.

I extend my warmest congratulations to all the teams!

### **Industry Modernization**

As we look forward, I can assure you that Telefilm is at the forefront of conversations about the modernization of Canada's audiovisual industry.

We're engaged with the CRTC about the implementation of the new regulatory framework that will ensure contributions to Canadian and Indigenous content.

As Sylvain Lafrance noted...at the end of last fiscal, it was announced that Telefilm would receive an additional fifty million dollars per year for the next two years.

I want to thank Canadian Heritage, for seeing the value of **our work**.

But I want to emphasize, it is crucial to make this extra funding permanent!

Predictability is **key** to the long-term future of our industry.

Against this backdrop of instability, I also want to tell you that all of us in the audiovisual sector are collaborating – sharing insights and information that will benefit everyone - The National Film Board, the Business Development Bank of Canada, the Indigenous Screen Office, and of course, the Canada Media Fund.

This is a time to come together because...**collaboration is our greatest asset!**

### **Coproduction**

And coproductions are a great example of collaboration!

We know the importance of coproductions – the financial participation of foreign countries boosts the budgets and audience reach for Canadian producers.

In 2023-24, Telefilm recommended fifty-seven films and TV co-productions - involving twenty-two partner countries to Canadian Heritage.

To support Canadian producers' access to funding, we maintain strong relations with key international partners.

Such as **Eurimages**.

The **New Dawn Fund**.

And the **Arctic Indigenous Film Fund**.

## **Indigenous Cinema**

What is particularly close to our hearts is Indigenous cinema.

Indigenous cinema is an integral part of Telefilm's vision.

Our allyship with Indigenous communities is a priority – **listening and learning** as we move towards reconciliation.

This year, with the help of an Indigenous Advisory committee, led by my colleagues at Telefilm, we developed and launched our **Indigenous Reconciliation Plan**.

This is a living and ever evolving... document.

I want to thank my Telefilm colleagues and the committee. Your ideas...your insights, perspectives and advice have been of **great value** in developing this plan.

We have learned a lot. And we've been inspired by Indigenous practices as we evolved our own at Telefilm.

## **Corporate Accomplishments**

I'd now like to take a moment to highlight a few of our corporate accomplishments with regard to internal plans...

We completed Phase 1 of the Eco-responsibility Action Plan.

Key funding targets were met for historically under-represented groups.

We published the first edition of program results from our self-identification data collection.

And our inaugural Accessibility Plan progress report was released.

## **Talent and Culture**

These plans demonstrate our commitment to diversity, accessibility and sustainability.

And I think they show that we are taking concrete, responsible and measurable actions that go far beyond words.

In fact, these principles are fundamental to our work and are applied by every member of our organization.

And they have earned us some awards to be proud of!

For a second straight year, Telefilm was named one of Montreal's top employers by Mediacorp Canada.

And we also earned the Silver Parity Certificate by Women in Governance.

Our team of over 200 employees is **valuable** to us, and we deeply appreciate each one of them.

We know that with a happy, engaged and equitable team, we all succeed.

This fall, Telefilm announced the re-opening of an office space in Halifax. It's important to maintain this presence and to have employees onsite to support the booming film industry in Atlantic Canada.

We have teams of experts across Canada!

## **Closing**

To conclude, I'd like to return to the topic of cinema.

The success of Canadian and Indigenous cinema is rooted in...

- teamwork,
- collaborations,
- partnerships,
- discussions, sometimes difficult but necessary,
- and mutual understanding of issues and viewpoints.

Telefilm is deeply interconnected to this intricate industry ecosystem and **uniquely equipped** to ensure that it is mobilized and modernized for the future.

The development of our three-year Strategic Plan is a result from concerted efforts and discussions with many of you.

And I want to thank you for your participation, contribution and commitment.

Despite the challenges ahead, we're excited!

We want to continue working together for the continued success and brilliance of Canadian and Indigenous cinema!

Finally, on a more personal note, I'd like to say that my first year of leading Telefilm has been incredibly stimulating. I feel truly privileged to contribute to an industry that I hold so dear to my heart.

With that, I'd like to thank you for joining us today and have a great day!