



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs announced today that the current funding level for international cultural relations (ICR) programs will be doubled over the next four years.

The Minister pointed out that international cultural programs express a broad range of Canadian accomplishments, covering the arts -- performing arts, visual arts, literature, film and video; academic relations -- Canadian studies, scholarships, academic exchanges; sport; and exchanges of persons.

The Department of External Affairs attaches great importance to raising the awareness and understanding of Canada, particularly by key partners such as the United States, Japan, other Asian nations and European countries. The Secretary of State for External Affairs explained: "Just as individuals deal more openly and regularly with those they know, so countries cooperate more willingly with those countries they know and respect". An innovative cultural presence abroad reinforces an image of Canada as a sophisticated, multifaceted industrial society.

Canada's performing arts companies and artists are particularly effective cultural ambassadors. As Mr. Clark pointed out: "An enriched program of international cultural relations reflects our confidence as a nation. It affirms this government's belief that Canadians can compete with the world's best. An expanded program will offer more opportunities for our artists, scholars and teams to promote their achievements -- and through them, to draw attention to Canada."

The Department of External Affairs will manage the program, on advice from specialists in government departments and cultural agencies and in consultation with arts, academic and sport organizations.