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The Future of Canada's International Cultural Relations

The stage is set for a dramatic expansion in Canada's international cultural relations which could yield substantial benefits to Canadians and strengthen Canada's presence in the world.

All signs point inescapably in this direction. Our artists and academics have reached a level of excellence recognized internationally and have developed to the point where their international exposure is solicited from abroad. Economically and politically, there are numerous commercial, trade, tourist and diplomatic advantages to capitalize on, not to mention new investment, market and revenue possibilities. There are opportunities to strengthen our bilateral ties with the countries of Europe, the Commonwealth, la Francophonie and with the United States as well as to make new friends in Latin America, Asia and Africa. There are also opportunities to gain a fresh perspective of ourselves without the distortion of a parochial attitude, to reinforce our bilingual and multicultural character and enhance our national unity and identity. From the world around them Canadians stand to gain a sense of solidarity and pride in their creative accomplishments, and the potential exists to minimize cultural domination by a few through interaction with many.

Canada has no less to give than it has to gain from its contacts with other countries. During the last few decades, many programs and activities have been developed within the country which represent a significant contribution to other nations in particular and world cultural progress in general. Perhaps this is why more and more nations around the world are expressing an interest in engaging in some form of "cultural cross-fertilization" with Canada.

Due to its rapidly evolving expertise in what are often called the "communication arts", Canada also possesses the capability to make a substantial contribution to the development of the new forms of communication which, in an age of austerity and financial

restraint, will be increasingly needed to broaden and deepen cultural understanding between nations. While some of the advances that are called for in the arts, the mass media, telecommunications and computer technology may be made in isolation, how much more rewarding it would be if most of them were made in a spirit of mutual co-operation and reciprocal benefit. Certainly Canada has no monopoly on insights and innovations in these areas. Many other nations have outstanding artists, technicians, scientists and scholars who could readily collaborate with their counterparts in Canada to lift international co-operation to new and rewarding heights.

Countries that are anxious to see their international cultural relations flourish in the future should be careful to base these relations on a number of well-defined principles. The principles which should guide and govern the development of Canada's international cultural relations in the future are:

Cultural relations constitute an integral component in their own right of global foreign policy;

External cultural policies are an extension of domestic cultural policies;

Cultural presence abroad should be of the highest standard of excellence;

Cultural relations should aim to be comprehensive in scope and global in character.

Long-term planning is the key to translating these principles into practice. The country now needs a long-term development plan capable of charting future directions and knitting together various strands of cultural expression, thus ensuring the enhancement of Canada's image throughout the world through pursuit of a vigorous cultural diplomacy.

The Bureau of International Cultural Relations is preparing such a plan in close consultation with the appropriate federal and provincial authorities and the cultural community at large. Extending over a 20-year time span, it is subdivided into shorter, 5-year action