

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE SIXTEENTH REPORT OF THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON CANADIAN HERITAGE ENTITLED: *GENDER PARITY IN
CANADIAN ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS*

Ms. Julie Dabrusin, M.P.
Chair
Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Ms. Dabrusin:

In accordance with Standing Order 109, the Government of Canada (the Government) is pleased to respond to the Sixteenth Report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage (the Committee) entitled *Gender Parity in Canadian Artistic and Cultural Organizations* (the Report), tabled in the House of Commons on January 29, 2019.

The Government of Canada would like to sincerely thank the Committee members for preparing the Report and its informed recommendations. The Government is grateful to the individuals and organizations who appeared before the Committee and shared their views and expert opinions regarding parity in artistic and cultural organizations. It was pleased to see the importance that gender parity has for the arts and culture sector and the commitment that many of its stakeholders have made to it.

The Government closely reviewed the Report. The Response, presented here, is organized by themes, matching the six themes under which the Committee made its recommendations in the Report, namely: 1) data and research, 2) collaboration and mentorship, 3) human resources, 4) federal funding, 5) federal appointments and 6) beyond gender parity.

The Government recognizes the importance of gender parity on the boards and in executive positions in artistic and cultural organizations, not just for the organizations but for Canadian society as a whole. Budget 2018 demonstrated the central place that the Government gives to gender equality, and Budget 2019 continues in this direction. The Report and its recommendations make a valuable contribution towards understanding the parity issue and offers worthwhile suggestions on how to promote it.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism

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The strength of any society depends on the participation of all its citizens, including women. Gender equality is a fundamental principle of Canadian society. It is enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is an integral part of the Constitution of Canada. It means that every individual, regardless of gender, is free to participate in all spheres of Canadian life, thereby contributing to an inclusive and democratic society. Canada believes that gender equality is not just a human rights matter, but also an essential aspect of sustainable development, social justice, peace and security, as well as economic growth.

Gender equality and promoting women's rights are a priority for the Government. In Budget 2018, the Government of Canada gives a prominent place to measures promoting gender equality. The Government has cemented its commitment to addressing gender equality and diversity in all areas within its scope of concern. Further to the creation of the Department of Women and Gender Equality in December 2018, the Government, in Budget 2019, proposes historic funding of \$160 million over five years to support the Department's gender equality objectives in Canada.

The Government is also aware of the role that arts and culture has in our society and recognizes that they are essential to the vitality of Canada's various communities. This is why, in 2016, the Government committed to doubling the Canada Council for the Arts' budget to \$360 million and to investing \$675 million in CBC/Radio-Canada. Since 2016, and without considering the new investment proposed in Budget 2019, the Government has invested \$3.2 billion in additional funds in previous budgets in the arts and culture sector, the largest reinvestment in 30 years.

Because they are rich in meaning and simultaneously reflect and shape the society in which we live, the arts and culture play a fundamental role in projecting society's image of itself. As such, the matter of parity in artistic and cultural organizations is seen not just from an access-to-employment perspective, but also from a cultural perspective. The organizations' leaders influence their organization and the artistic and cultural choices made and to which Canadians will have access. It is important that those choices reflect a certain diversity of perspectives and experiences, which the Committee's study focused on.

It is important to ensure that gender equality involves all sectors, including arts and culture. Parity is one of the various ways of achieving that equality. The arts and culture

sector, like all sectors, must be able to provide an equitable place to talented men and women and to diversity.

The Government welcomes the Committee's Report, which offers suggestions for better understanding and constructively approaching the matter of gender parity on boards of directors and in executive positions of Canadian artistic and cultural organizations.

Theme 1: Data and research (recommendations 1 and 2)

The Government recognizes the importance of documenting and measuring progress in gender equality. Budget 2018 introduced the Gender Results Framework, developed by the Department of Women and Gender Equality (Status of Women Canada at that time), the Department of Finance and Global Affairs Canada and supported by the Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics created by Statistics Canada in September 2018. The framework describes what the federal Government is trying to achieve in terms of gender equality and how it intends to achieve it. The Government's six overarching gender-equality objectives identified in that framework involve: 1) education and skills development, 2) economic participation and prosperity, 3) leadership and democratic participation, 4) gender-based violence, 5) poverty, health and well-being and 6) peace, security and access to justice around the world.

In Budget 2019, the Government proposes allocating \$1 million over two years to the Department of Canadian Heritage to improve the collection of disaggregated data, enabling it to obtain more specific information about the arts and culture sector.

The Committee's study also reflects the efforts undertaken by the various arts and culture sub-sectors for conducting studies and developing a body of data for better understanding the parity situation in specific arts and culture sectors.

Although a number of studies exist, these often provide a fragmented picture of the situation, which makes it difficult to grasp the scope of the issues. In addition, there is little data on the presence of women on the boards of directors of artistic and cultural organizations. The data available show that women are present in varying degrees, depending on the discipline. With the exception of the fields of visual arts and of literature and publishing, women are quite uncommon in artistic leadership positions, which are key positions in terms of the influence they have on the content of cultural productions. Also, a number of sources indicate that wage gaps between men and women still exist, to women's disadvantage. They also indicate that women artists and their works enjoy less visibility and public recognition. These realities are part of a list of

factors that reveal a broader disparity between men and women in the arts and culture sector¹.

The lack of consistency across the data collected and the research conducted on the subject of parity makes it difficult to get an overview of the situation for each arts and culture discipline, to grasp the disparities, and to understand their causes. The Government therefore welcomes the Committee's recommendation to better document this issue.

Canadian Heritage will explore the various means available for more systematically collecting data on the composition of boards of directors and the people holding senior management positions in arts and culture organizations in order to be better able to report on the situation and progress made. To this end, the Canada Council for the Arts has begun important work by launching a pilot project in January 2019 for collecting demographic data from some of its recipients. The Council is undertaking this pilot project to better understand the makeup of the workforce and boards of the organizations it funds, and to explore the potential for systematic data collection in the future. In addition to gender, information about age, cultural diversity, Indigenous heritage, official language minority status, and deafness or disabilities is collected. Canadian Heritage will work with its various partners to assess the potential of implementing a similar data-collection strategy enabling it to achieve its objectives, in keeping with the provisions of the *Privacy Act*.

The Department of Canadian Heritage will also assess research needs, including with regard to factors that explain the under-representation of women on boards and in executive positions in the arts and culture sector. The Department will undertake this work in collaboration with the Canada Council for the Arts and the other organizations in the Canadian Heritage portfolio.

Theme 2: Collaboration and mentorship (recommendations 3 and 4)

A number of the witnesses who participated in the Committee's study confirmed that arts and culture benefit from a large pool of competent women. The studies available tend to support those comments. An analysis of the workforce composition in the major occupational groups shows that, despite significant disparities, women are relatively well represented in the arts and culture sector. The participation of men and women in most of the major occupational groups studied is balanced (those groups are visual artists, writers, actors and comedians, and other performing artists). This means that the participation of men and women is between 40% and 60%. Artisans; producers, directors and

¹ Coles, Amanda, Kate MacNeill and al. (Deakin University), *Status of Women in the Canadian Arts and Cultural Industries*, 2010-2018 research review, prepared for the Ontario Arts Council, August 2018.

choreographers; conductors, composers and arrangers are the groups with the fewest numbers of women, comprising between 33% and 39% of the workforce. The dancers group has a higher number of women (86%).

Also, the available data tells us that professional women artists and cultural workers are just as or more educated than men (specialized studies and/or graduate degrees). This information enables us to understand that lack of staff and education levels are not factors that can explain the disparity between men and women on boards and in executive positions in organizations².

A number of witnesses who participated in the Committee's study pointed out that women often do not enjoy the same career development opportunities as men. They told the Committee that, although on the boards or in executive positions, women are often confined to these roles within smaller organizations. Some witnesses identified that better coaching, through mentoring for example, would help them in their career development. Having access to more development opportunities, including international ones, would also help make them better-equipped candidates.

The federal Government offers various programs and has established various initiatives that help better equip women and promote their appointment to boards and executive positions. Budget 2018 provided \$100 million over five years to Status of Women Canada (now, the Department of Women and Equality) for the Women's Program. The objective of that program is to achieve the full participation of women in the economic, social and democratic life of Canada. It provides funding to support projects at the local, regional and national levels that address the following three priority areas: ending violence against women and girls; improving women's and girls' economic security and prosperity; and encouraging women and girls in leadership and decision-making roles. Promoting gender parity and promoting women's leadership in arts and culture are among the types of projects that can be eligible for this program.

Under the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada is setting up a Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub in order to advance research, collect and disseminate data, and share knowledge, including on best practices. As part of that initiative, the Ontario College of Art and Design University will place special emphasis on women creators and artists who are entrepreneurs.

The Young Canada Works program provides financial assistance to eligible employers interested in hiring young, talented applicants. One component of this program targets not-for-profit Canadian artistic and cultural organizations that want to create internships

² Coles, Amanda, Kate MacNeill et al. (Deakin University), Status of Women in the Canadian Arts and Cultural Industries, 2010-2018 research review, prepared for the Ontario Arts Council, August 2018.

in artistic practice, cultural management or arts administration for recent college and university graduates.

A variety of funding mechanisms are also offered by the Department of Canadian Heritage to support various professional development projects and collective initiatives in the various arts and culture disciplines. For example, the Canada Book Fund supports professional development programs in the book industry through its Support for Organizations component. Depending on needs, a project for better equipping women leaders could potentially be eligible.

For its part, the Sector Innovation and Development component of the Supporting Artistic Practice program by the Canada Council for the Arts could be another avenue made available to organizations for proposing leadership development projects, including exchanges and other forms of collaboration, such as mentoring programs.

The Canada Council for the Arts has also partnered with the Salzburg Global Seminar for giving young Canadian cultural innovators the chance to strengthen their leadership skills and engage with peers from around the world. Between 2017 and 2020, the Canada Council for the Arts and the Salzburg Global Seminar will select five young Canadians per year to participate in the renowned Salzburg Global Forum for Young Cultural Innovators. Lastly, the Canada Council for the Arts is actively involved in discussions with its counterparts in other countries, including the National Endowment for the Arts (United States), the National Fund for Culture and the Arts (Mexico), and the British Council, regarding potential exchanges in cultural leadership and other opportunities. Other countries could be added to that list.

More generally, Budget 2019 announces the Government's intention to help to address key barriers to adults upskilling, including women, through the Canada Training Benefit. The Government is also proposing to allocate more resources to Employment and Social Development Canada to provide the Department with the means to improve the collection of gender and diversity data in order to boost its capacity to better measure, monitor and address gender disparity and promote access for under-represented groups across the Government's skills programming.

The arts and culture sector and the community sector are also exhibiting leadership by having established a number of initiatives that help better equip women and prepare them for more important roles in organizations. The Committee heard different examples, including one from Opera.ca, which is developing a program to pair women leaders with candidates interested in leadership positions, in order for the latter to gain the necessary experience. The YWCA of Quebec is very active in this field and offers a range of initiatives for increasing the number of women on organizations' boards of directors.

These initiatives not only help better equip women, but also promote the recruiting of women by providing support services to organizations.

Theme 3: Human resources (recommendations 5, 6 and 7)

The Government recognizes that all partners, including the public and private sectors, labour, and civil society, have a role to play in removing the systemic and social barriers that prevent women from participating fully in society and playing leadership roles. The federal Government instituted Gender-based Analysis Plus training to ensure that federal public servants, as well as parliamentarians and their staff, are equipped with the necessary knowledge in implementing gender mainstreaming tools. In addition, the Department of Women and Gender Equality created an online introductory course on Gender-based Analysis Plus which is accessible to the public. That training has been taken by members of Government, the private sector and civil society organizations as part of their professional development. The tools available through that training can be tailored to the specific context of members of boards of directors.

Access to assistance promoting work/life balance for mothers was mentioned to the Committee. In Budget 2018, the Government stated its commitment to improving access to the Canada Child Benefit to support working mothers and fathers. The Government is also investing in early learning and child care by supporting the creation of more high-quality, affordable child care across the country. The Government is also proposing changes to the current legal framework in order to guide employers to take proactive pay equity measures in federally regulated sectors.

The Government of Canada encourages artistic and cultural organizations to tackle the barriers that limit women's advancement in organizations. For example, the Strategic Initiatives component of Canadian Heritage's Canada Cultural Investment Fund supports collaborative initiatives for improving the business practices of artistic and cultural organizations, including recruiting and professional development strategies. Among the projects funded, the component supports the Talent to Lead mentoring project managed by the Cultural Human Resources Council, which aims to address the issue of succession in leadership positions in the arts and heritage sector. The project is taking in its third cohort of participants this year. Mentoring opportunities have been exclusively offered to leaders from Indigenous, racialized communities and from official language minority communities. That cohort is 85% women.

The Department of Canadian Heritage recognizes that safe, respectful and harassment-free workplaces are essential to the health of artistic and cultural organizations. That is why, further to a number of serious, well-known allegations of sexual harassment and assault in the sector, the Department and its portfolio organizations are actively involved in addressing this issue.

On January 5, 2018, the Minister of Canadian Heritage stated that the Department was standing “with artists, actors and creators across industries in saying that there is no tolerance for harassment”. Since then, the Department has modified its funding instruments to ensure that recipients are committed to providing safe, respectful workplaces that are free from any form of harassment against all members of their organization.

In addition, the Department of Canadian Heritage, in partnership with the Canada Council for the Arts, has made a targeted investment in the Respectful Workplaces in the Arts initiative by the Cultural Human Resources Council. This combined investment of just over \$550,000 over three years will help develop various tools and resources, such as webinars on harassment and legislation, best practices documentation on anti-harassment policies and procedures, example of codes of conduct, recommendations on reporting mechanisms, etc. The objective is to train roughly 1,750 artistic and cultural organizations across Canada.

It is important to specify that workplace issues, including harassment, are a shared responsibility between the various governments and the sector. Each government (provincial, territorial and federal) is responsible for the workplaces that fall under their respective legislation and labour code. As for employers, they have responsibilities pertaining to employee training and professional development, compliance with policies, and employee representation. To this end, the arts and culture sector is demonstrating its commitment by implementing a number of measures, such as awareness campaigns, training, and the adoption of codes of conduct for ensuring respectful workplaces.

Stakeholders in the cultural sector have responded promptly by implementing initiatives designed to mitigate the incidence of workplace harassment and resolve issues when and where they arise. One notable initiative is Not in OUR Space! – the theatre community’s national anti-harassment and respectful workplace campaign developed collaboratively by Canadian Actors’ Equity and the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT). Another example is *l’Aparté* in Quebec, which, with funding from the provincial government, moved quickly to implement reporting, legal advice and counselling for victims of sexual harassment.

These are just a few examples of how the Government of Canada is supporting the work done by the arts and culture sector to reach its full potential. In parallel, some of the barriers to women’s advancement in artistic and cultural organizations are associated with social policies and programs that are not within the Government of Canada’s responsibility. Given the commitment already shown by artistic and cultural organizations to removing barriers to women’s advancement, the implementation of measures at all levels will help foster the elimination of more barriers.

Theme 4: Federal funding (recommendation 8)

The Committee's study highlighted the fact that arts and culture organizations are concerned about the issue of parity. A number of them have taken the initiative of evaluating their practices and taking concrete action towards greater gender parity. For example, various groups and associations, such as the Gender Equality Committee established by the *Union des écrivaines et des écrivains québécois* and the Across the Board group in the music industry are raising awareness in their respective sectors and calling upon them to tackle gender inequalities.

The Professional Association of Canadian Theatres, which is the collective voice of Canadian professional theatres, launched the Pledge project, which aims to encourage its members to make public commitments for achieving parity in their company, in terms of boards of directors, artistic decision-making and strategic planning. The commitments made by some theatre companies include producing more plays written by female playwrights and achieving parity on boards of directors. The organization Art Toronto, which is responsible for Toronto Biennial of Art, has set itself the goal of having a diverse board of directors by the end of 2019.

For its part, the Government has a variety of tools for promoting parity on boards and in executive positions in the arts and culture sector. An increasing number of examples show the Department of Canadian Heritage's commitment to incorporating concrete gender-parity measures. For example, the Canada Media Fund's Accelerator Partnership Program requires applicants to have at least 40% women in certain predefined key positions. As of 2018-2019, the Canada Music Fund included a new provision in its contribution agreements encouraging not-for-profit organizations supported by this Fund, and the Fund's third-party administrators, to adopt a policy on gender equality, diversity and inclusion intended for their organizations' executive and boards of directors. The funding announced in Budget 2019 for improving the collection of disaggregated data will strengthen the Department's capacity to better support gender equality and diversity when allocating funds.

The Committee was informed about the leadership role of the Canadian Heritage portfolio organizations, such as Telefilm Canada, which has taken concrete action to ensure greater parity in the production of feature films. The organization has made it a goal to achieve a balanced production portfolio that reflects gender parity in all key positions in directing, screenwriting and producing by 2020. In 2017-2018, women comprised 44% of directors, 46% of screenwriters and 48% of producers. The National Film Board of Canada is another example of a federal agency that has made great progress toward parity of artists and filmmakers. After committing in 2016 to achieving gender parity in key creative positions, the National Film Board reported in 2017-2018 that it had achieved its objectives. In fact, 47% of the works were directed by women,

46% of the production budget was allocated to women, and 47% of the screenwriting positions were held by women. The National Film Board has also committed to achieving gender parity in other key creative positions, namely in editing, cinematography and music composition by 2020. For its part, the Canada Council for the Arts, included data on the gender of individual recipients and peer evaluators for the first time in its 2017-2018 Corporate Scorecard.

In addition, the Department of Women and Gender Equality is working with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to find lasting solutions for enabling more women to get into key creative positions in the film and television production sector.

Given the many advances made by the community itself and the various forms that parity-support measures can take, the Department of Canadian Heritage reiterates its commitment to exploring ways to systematically collect data and continue research in this area. This will enable the Department and its partners to explore various potential avenues for sector-specific interventions.

Theme 5: Federal appointments (recommendation 9)

Canadian Heritage portfolio organizations play a key role in developing and promoting our culture and arts, and in preserving our heritage. The effectiveness of their boards of directors depends on their members' ability, based on their judgement, expertise and knowledge, to address the various challenges, demands and expectations facing those organizations.

In February 2016, the Government of Canada adopted a more rigorous approach to Governor in Council appointments. That approach involves open, transparent and merit-based selection processes that aim to not only ensure gender parity, but also to reflect Canada's diversity.

Considerable efforts are being made to ensure that the boards of directors and senior executives of Canadian Heritage portfolio organizations respect gender parity and are representative of Canada's diversity.

The Canadian Heritage portfolio has 174 Governor in Council appointments. Of those, 37 are full-time positions and 137 are part-time positions. As of April 12, 2019, 52% of the positions were held by women, which represent 86 positions. Eighteen percent of the Governor in Council appointees (29 positions) self-identified as a minority, while 8% (13 positions) self-identified as Indigenous. One percent of the appointees self-identified as part of the LGBTQ2 community, and the same percentage self-identified as having a disability. Seven percent of the appointees (11 positions) self-identified as being 35 years old or less, and therefore in the youth category.

The Government is also committed to increasing the representation of women in executive positions in the private sector. In May 2018, Bill C-25 received Royal Assent, amending the *Canada Business Corporations Act* to require corporations to disclose, to their shareholders, diversity information including the representation of women, Indigenous peoples, visible minorities and persons with disabilities on their boards of directors and executive teams.

Theme 6: Beyond gender parity (recommendation 10)

Beyond gender parity, the Government of Canada seeks to foster and promote an inclusive society where everyone can participate fully in Canada's economic, cultural, social and political life. Diversity is one of our country's strengths, but issues remain that prevent it from taking its rightful place.

A few witnesses who participated in the Committee's study pointed out the greater difficulties faced by women to access boards and executive positions when they belong to certain minority groups such as First Nations, Inuit or Métis, are racialized or have a disability, for example. As mentioned to the Committee, although some progress has been made for women, it generally involves women in majority groups. Women in marginalized groups, though, are apparently more likely to hold precarious positions.

In Budget 2018, the Government of Canada announced \$23 million in funding to strengthen the Multiculturalism Program, including a Canada-wide consultation on a new national approach to address racism and additional financial assistance that prioritizes Indigenous peoples and racialized women and girls. Funding of \$19 million for the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Public Health Agency of Canada has also been allocated to fund initiatives to address racism and discrimination and the unique challenges faced by Black Canadian youth. Budget 2019 builds on those commitments and proposes additional funding of \$45 million over three years to support the new anti-racism strategy developed further to the consultations. Budget also proposes \$25 million over five years in support of the International Decade for People of African Descent. The activities funded under these initiatives could include leadership and employment opportunities.

Many of the witnesses who participated in the study are aware of the benefits of diverse perspectives and experiences and are taking the necessary steps to encourage diversity in the decision-making positions within their organizations. An initiative like Ryerson University's onBoard Canada offers a variety of training and tools such as a service to connect organizations with qualified candidates from marginalized groups.

In keeping with the Government's commitment to incorporating gender and diversity considerations into the development of its policies and programs, those considerations are an integral part of Canadian Heritage's practices. Beyond the gender dimension, being

marginalized from the point of view of deafness or disability, gender identity, sexual orientation or belonging to First Nations, Inuit, the Métis or a racialized group are among the different dimensions of identity being taken into consideration. The Government is working to ensure that Gender-based Analysis Plus is fully applied to all aspects of policy and program development.

Conclusion

A healthy, vibrant and democratic society cannot afford to exclude a portion of its population due to prejudices. Those prejudices, often unconscious, guide our choices and prevent us from appreciating talents to their full extent. The Government is committed to making equality one of the foundations of our society.

As pointed out by some of the Committee participants, it is not just up to women to adapt; society as a whole needs to change and fully commit to equality. Transformative change takes time and effort and benefits from being supported by resources.

The Government is pleased to see the arts and culture community's leadership in promoting gender parity and diversity. A number of sub-sectors have taken the lead by conducting their own studies and taking concrete action for promoting parity and diversity and combating harassment.

The Government is aware that there is still a significant way to go. As such, it will continue to support the efforts made by sector organizations promoting equality and diversity and find ways to encourage those that are not yet headed in that direction.