



# Message from the President and CEO

The year 2002-2003 has been another benchmark year in CBC/Radio-Canada's history. We are proud of our progress in fundamentally transforming our programming, operations and management as part of our efforts to reshape the Corporation into a true public broadcaster. We know that our audiences are responding to these changes, as 95 per cent of Canadians tell us that it is essential that CBC/Radio-Canada is available to Canadians.

The Government has recently shown its continued confidence in our strategic directions by announcing that \$60 million in new funding will again be allocated to CBC/Radio-Canada for the upcoming fiscal year. These funds will be invested in programming improvements for the benefit of all Canadians.

## ■ 50 Years of Television in Canada

In the Fall of 2002, CBC/Radio-Canada celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of television in Canada. A multitude of events across the country drew thousands of Canadians who came to express their support for and sense of ownership of their national public broadcaster. It was a wonderful testimonial to Canadians' feeling of belonging, familiarity and connection to CBC/Radio-Canada – a daily mainstay in their communities.

Our Television networks dipped into their extraordinary archives for recordings of many of Canada's great events and ideas, as well as singular stages in the early careers of Canadian artists and journalists who later achieved national and international success. These archives revealed CBC/Radio-Canada's role in marking and reflecting on pivotal moments of celebration and loss, alongside everyday moments in the lives of Canadians throughout the country whose stories describe the character of Canada.

## ■ Public Broadcasting – More Important than Ever

When I began my term as President and CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada in November 1999, I had a strong conviction about the importance of public broadcasting in this country. At about midway in my mandate, as rapid change and uncertainty in the world of broadcasting become the norm, I hold this belief more strongly than ever. Canada needs a public space for Canadian News and information, regional stories for local and national audiences, Canadian drama and entertainment, as well as Canadian views, perspectives and values.



Yet, let us look at the current context. The 500-channel multi-media universe has taken shape, offering a great deal of choice to viewers. A large percentage of this programming, especially in prime time, is foreign and does not necessarily represent Canadian society or values. Next to this, the cost of creating excellent genuine indigenous Canadian programming is very high and such programming must compete for audiences alongside all of the other programming choices.

These facts point to the need for a strong national public broadcaster in Canada. The proliferation of channels of sameness paves the way for the national public broadcaster to offer distinctive, high-quality, innovative Canadian programming. CBC/Radio-Canada provides a reflection of Canada's cultural diversity and a panoply of perspectives. Whereas we cannot compete with private networks on resources, we can compete on the basis of *quality*, a clear focus on *true Canadian content*, and a new approach to *resource sharing* among our different media for the purpose of producing better programming.

There are other compelling grounds for maintaining the public broadcaster. Public service broadcasting is increasingly seen as the most important tool for fostering nation building, and helping to build a civil society, democratic institutions and an informed public. In the context of globalisation, these strengths are critical to the health of a nation. For this reason, CBC/Radio-Canada has been moving towards becoming a true public broadcaster serving all Canadians.

## ■ How Are We Changing?

Our eight strategic priorities, described in the following pages, are guiding our decision-making in programming, operations and management. They are allowing us to invest more money in excellent Canadian programming and helping us to reinforce our role as the national public broadcaster.

In programming, we are strengthening our traditional excellence in journalism, children's programming, sports, arts, drama, and entertainment. We are repositioning French Television and continuing the transformation of English Television. We are undertaking English Radio renewal and seeing the positive results of French Radio renewal. We are increasing cross-media, cross-cultural activities and the sharing of resources and information in order to produce savings and more in-depth programming on a greater variety of subjects. We are developing websites for different ages and interests and seeing significant growth in the use of *CBC.ca* and *radio-canada.ca*.

We are finding business opportunities through the creation of partnerships and strategic alliances in order to extend our reach, optimise our investment, mitigate risk, and create new revenue streams. We are also continuing to leverage our assets in order to re-invest in programming.



## ■ We Are Looking to the Future

We intend to remain relevant to Canadians within today's challenging broadcasting sector. We recognise the need to be flexible and open to change and new ways of doing things in order to survive and flourish. We are already investing in new technologies and new work methods in order to generate savings to re-invest in programming. In fact, our real estate consolidation projects in Edmonton, Ottawa and Québec City, which will allow all of our media groups to work *together*, are pertinent examples of our willingness to initiate fundamental change for improvement.

To achieve our goals and support our strategic directions, however, the Corporation needs adequate funding. Our programming requires extensive planning. Television programming in particular generally requires three years from concept to broadcast. Budget uncertainty from year to year therefore limits our ability to plan resources and programming and to derive the most value from available funds. To alleviate this uncertainty and to allow us to achieve our strategic goals, CBC/Radio-Canada needs a commitment to long-term base funding.

In a competitive marketplace that demands speedy response and certainty, CBC/Radio-Canada also requires increased financial flexibility to allow us to commit quickly to business opportunities. With guaranteed adequate funding and financial flexibility, CBC/Radio-Canada could be more responsive to the changing needs of Canadians.

During my mandate, I will continue my efforts to attain better and more stable funding for CBC/Radio-Canada.

## ■ On a Personal Note

Once again this year, I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the Board of Directors of CBC/Radio-Canada for their invaluable support and strategic guidance, and especially to Carole Taylor, Chair of the Board, who has brought her expertise and extraordinary enthusiasm to the job.

On behalf of CBC/Radio-Canada staff, I also want to say farewell to some dear on-air friends whom we lost this year – Chester Duncan, Rube Hornstein, Bob Kerr, Renaude Lapointe, Otto Lowy, Bill McNeil, Harry Mannis, Huguette Paré, and Art Rockwood. Their contributions will be remembered by audiences and colleagues alike.



## ■ Many Thanks to Our Talented Employees

Our creative and technical teams daily demonstrate their dedication to the ideals of public broadcasting through the excellence of their work on-air and behind the scenes. The hundreds of national and international awards received by our employees each year attest to their skills.

Without such a talented staff, our goal of transforming CBC/Radio-Canada into a dynamic national public broadcaster for the benefit of all Canadians would not be achievable. Many thanks to our wonderful employees!

## ■ In Closing

I believe that the contribution of CBC/Radio-Canada to the development of Canadian culture and society is immeasurably and increasingly important. We have demonstrated our willingness to initiate fundamental change to our programming, operations and management in order to improve our service to Canadians. Over the last three years, we have offered our programming on more platforms, sought advantageous partnerships and alliances, and explored new ways of doing business in an evolving and highly competitive broadcasting environment.

We continue to carry out our duties ever mindful of the central role this public broadcaster plays in sustaining and developing Canadian society. I can assure Canadians that we intend to remain a strong national public broadcaster that speaks *about* and *to* all Canadians.

Robert Rabinovitch  
President and CEO