

Speaking Notes for the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Heritage
Notes d'allocution pour l'honorable Steven Guilbeault, ministre de Patrimoine canadien

Canadian Museums Association virtual conference – Congrès virtuel de l'Association des musées canadiens
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Thank you, Jack, for the kind introduction.

J'avais bien hâte de participer au congrès de l'Association des musées canadiens à Montréal, mais la situation actuelle nous a obligés à changer le plan.

Donc, je vous parle depuis mon bureau à Gatineau, Québec, sur le territoire traditionnel des Algonquins.

At times like these, it's more important than ever for us to stay connected, even while we keep our distance physically for the sake of our own health and the health of other Canadians.

I want to thank the Canadian Museums Association and the provincial and territorial museum associations for bringing us together today.

I know calling off the conference was a tough decision for you. Despite that major setback, you've been incredibly resourceful in order to make this virtual meeting possible.

I would also like to thank all the people in the museum community for supporting physical distancing measures since the start of this crisis.

Au gouvernement, nous sommes conscients qu'en fermant vos salles d'exposition, vous faites un énorme sacrifice pour assurer la santé et la sécurité des Canadiens et des Canadiennes.

Comme vous, je suis très préoccupé par les effets dévastateurs de la situation actuelle. J'en ai discuté avec Vanda et je sais que l'insécurité temporaire et les pertes de revenu sont une grande source de préoccupation pour vous tous. Surtout à l'approche de la haute saison touristique.

Je comprends aussi la responsabilité que vous avez envers vos employés, que ce soit vos professionnels ou vos travailleurs occasionnels comme les étudiants.

I want you to know that our government is doing everything it can to be there for you.

We've responded quickly, knowing that the needs to make ends meet are urgent.

We've introduced the Canada Emergency Response Benefit to help people who have lost work, including contract and self-employed workers.

We've introduced the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy to help businesses and non-profit organisations keep their staff on the payroll.

And we've continued to provide funding to museums.

As we speak, my team at Canadian Heritage is still processing funding requests for the Museums Assistance Program.

Even for situations where an exhibition has been cancelled or postponed, I've asked my Department to be as flexible as possible with how you can use your funding. Please contact your program officer—they're here to work through these issues with you.

I've also approved multi-year funding to the Young Canada Works in Heritage program.

I know it will be a while before museums will be running at full capacity again, so we will endeavour to be as flexible as possible on how you can use this funding.

That could mean giving employers the ability to extend the project into the fall and winter, or giving students the option to work remotely or on a part-time basis.

Finally, we're working on other measures specific to the cultural sector. I hope to be able to announce them soon.

Les musées jouent un grand rôle dans la vie des Canadiens et des Canadiennes. Ils éclairent le passé et le présent pour nous aider à mieux comprendre où nous allons.

En ce moment, nous voyons à quel point l'accès aux collections numériques est important. En cette période d'incertitude, les musées continuent à nous donner des repères stables grâce aux expositions en ligne. Ce savoir-faire que vous développez sera précieux pour préparer l'après-pandémie.

Access to digital collections for all Canadians is an important part of the national museums policy review. It is one of the mandates given to me by the Prime Minister.

I know that you have high expectations for the new museums policy. That's why we want to make sure it's done right.

You have my commitment that we will resume this work once this crisis has passed.

L'élaboration d'un cadre pour le rapatriement des biens culturels et des restes ancestraux autochtones, ainsi que la sensibilisation aux changements climatiques me tiennent à cœur.

Ce sont deux autres éléments de ma lettre de mandat et ils restent à l'ordre du jour. Votre collaboration sera précieuse, car les musées ont un rôle important à jouer pour avancer la réconciliation avec les peuples autochtones et donner l'heure juste sur les changements climatiques.

Our discussions today will give me food for thought on the national policy review.

And, most importantly, they will help our government better support you in these difficult times.

I stand with you, and we will do all we can to come out of this even stronger than before.

Thank you.