

## **CRTC Chairman, Jean-Pierre Blais, Responds to WIFTV Submission During Speech at the Awards Gala of the Women in Communications and Technology**

Ottawa, Ontario  
April 26, 2017

Thank you. I'd like to extend my congratulations to Heather Conway and all the other women who are being recognized this evening.

Over and above their professional accomplishments, this year's recipients promote a more diverse industry and serve as mentors and inspiration for the next generation of women leaders.

Yet it's disheartening that, in 2017, gender parity in senior creative and media roles continues to be a goal rather than a reality.

During our recent proceeding to renew the television licences of the large media groups, Women in Film and Television Vancouver submitted that women in the industry "are facing systemic barriers to career advancement into the highest creative and decision-making ranks."

And a recent study of the Canadian film industry by Women in View showed that women represented less than 25% of directors, writers and cinematographers in a sample of over 90 feature-length films.

This is very troubling when you consider that women make up the majority of the Canadian population.

Canada can boast of having directors, writers, producers and others in creative roles that are among the best in their craft. Our productions travel the globe; our stories resonate with global audiences.

And yet, I can't help but think of the untapped potential in the industry. I can't help but think of the women whose skills could make our productions even better, but who are left without opportunity. I can't help but think about the stories that are currently left untold because of the barriers that exist. For example, 16% of women belong to a visible minority group. Are their stories being told in our audiovisual media to the extent that they should?

This is not to say that there hasn't been encouraging news lately. The National Film Board of Canada, the Canada Media Fund and Telefilm Canada all recently announced new initiatives to foster more participation by women.

There is currently a groundswell of activity among those dedicated to strengthening gender diversity in Canadian media. We need to harness their enthusiasm and their ideas, and bring others to the table, to effect lasting change. New technologies may also create opportunities in

the coming years. This is a perfect time to take action to ensure women are fairly represented in the production activities of the future.

This evening, I'm pleased to announce that the CRTC will use its convening power to initiate a broader discussion on these issues. In the coming months, we will be planning an event on women in production, with a particular emphasis on women in leadership positions.

This is not something we can tackle on our own. So we want to engage with all those who are interested. There will be opportunities for you to participate and contribute. One of our first tasks will be to form a steering committee to organize the event. This committee will scope out exactly what will be discussed at the event, the format we will use to bring people together and set the outcomes we will commit to achieving.

We also hope to partner with an existing conference or event to host our discussion on women in production.

I hope everyone in this room will come together and work with a common purpose towards this worthy goal. We've often said we can do better. Now's the time for action.

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