

*Attention Entertainment reporters, television reporters, business reporters, assignment editors*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Creative Community Backs Independent Producers  
in Talks with Television Networks**

*Performers, Directors and Screenwriters Express Support for Terms of Trade*

**TORONTO - July 23, 2008** – The unions and guilds that represent Canada’s professional performers, directors and screenwriters expressed their strong support for the efforts of the Canadian Film and Television Production Association (CFTPA), one of the country’s two principal independent producer groups, in its negotiations with the major private broadcast networks, as well as CBC, to secure equitable agreements for program rights.

"We support the independent producers' position that equitable terms of trade agreements are needed to secure fairer deals for program rights," said Stephen Waddell, National Executive Director of ACTRA. "Reaching fair terms for granting rights is a struggle with which we are familiar. We see the obvious value here for performers, so ACTRA is supportive of the independent producers' efforts."

Today the CFTPA is slated to sit down with CTV, Canwest Global and Rogers to begin negotiating "terms of trade" - framework agreements that would define and value program rights. These framework agreements would apply to individual negotiations between broadcasters and producers for these rights – a requirement that is essential to help mitigate the severe imbalances in negotiating power caused by broadcaster consolidation.

"Broadcasters are the gatekeepers of Canadian television programming," said Maureen Parker, Executive Director of the Writers Guild of Canada. "This in itself gives them powerful leverage when dealing with producers, and the imbalance of negotiating power has only been exacerbated by the broadcaster mergers of recent years. If producers are pressured into granting broadcasters program rights for little or nothing, screenwriters and the creative community are impoverished as a result."

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has mandated that all broadcasters submit draft or signed terms of trade agreements with independent producers as part of their broadcast licence renewal applications, with the deadline expected to be in late 2008 or early 2009.

"We're very glad that the CRTC has affirmed the importance and urgency of terms of trade," said Brian Anthony, National Executive Director of the Directors Guild of Canada. "We regard terms of trade as an essential component of a broader regulatory strategy aimed at ensuring a vibrant Canadian production sector that continues to have the creative and financial capacity to produce great Canadian programming."

**About ACTRA**

ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists) is a national organization of professional performers working in the English-language recorded media in Canada. ACTRA represents the interests of 21,000 members across Canada - the foundation of Canada's highly acclaimed professional performing community.

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### **About the Directors Guild of Canada**

The Directors Guild of Canada (DGC) is a national labour organization that represents over 3,800 key creative and logistical personnel in the film and television industry covering all areas of direction, design, production and editing. The DGC negotiates and administers collective agreements and lobbies extensively on issues of concern for members including Canadian content conditions, CRTC regulations and ensuring that funding is maintained for Canadian film and television programming.

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### **About the Writers Guild of Canada**

The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) represents almost 1,900 professional English-language screenwriters across Canada. These are the talented people who create the distinctly Canadian entertainment we enjoy on our televisions, movie screens, radios and computers.

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