

For immediate release

**UNESCO Director-General Presents the “City of Design” Certificate to Mayor  
Gérald Tremblay during a Visit to Montréal**

**Montréal, June 6, 2006** – The Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, today presented to the Mayor of Montréal, Gérald Tremblay, an official certificate designating Montréal as a “UNESCO City of Design”, as part of the Creative Cities Network of the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity, at an official ceremony held at Montréal city hall.

“It is a great honour for me to give the title of UNESCO city of design to Montréal, because your city has already demonstrated its ability to inspire synergy between public and private players as part of the World Book Capital program, a title it has held for a year until April 2006. Today, this new title will make Montréal an exemplary city inspired by design, highlighting the city’s great creative, social, economic design potential throughout the world,” said Mr. Matsuura.

“This designation by UNESCO is a major international recognition for Montréal. I believe that all the creators and players involved in the field of design in Montréal can be proud of this honour and of their excellent achievements. I hope that our involvement in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network will lead rapidly to partnerships in the field of design. We are currently working on a first project that will bring together designers of three UNESCO cities of design, Berlin, Buenos Aires and Montréal. They will be invited to enrich the **redevelopment program for the place d’Armes** in Old Montréal. Their shared contribution will help us to reexamine the possibilities of this landmark,” said Mayor Tremblay.

“Design is part of today’s and tomorrow’s heritage, and Montrealers must share the honour of the title of City of Design. That is why this fall the Bureau Design Montréal will be launching a **Doors Open on Design and Architecture event**, to enable Montrealers to discover or rediscover the talents and achievements that reflect the creative drive recognized by UNESCO. I firmly believe that very soon, events such as this will become as popular as the Museum open house events or Culture Days. I wish to thank the Bureau Design Montréal and Benoît Labonté, member of the executive committee responsible for culture, heritage and design for his leadership in producing Montréal’s candidacy document, “concluded Mayor Tremblay.

These two activities will be held as part of the Entente sur le développement culturel (cultural development agreement) with the Québec ministère de la Culture et des Communications.

With this award, Montréal becomes the first North American city to join the recent UNESCO City of Design network, after Buenos Aires (August 2005) and Berlin (November 2005). UNESCO recognizes the effort and enthusiasm of the public and private sectors, Montréal civil society, as well as the city's potential for economic and social development in the field of design. This UNESCO award will serve as an incentive lever to accelerate implementation of the recent municipal action plan Montréal, *Design de ville / Ville de design*, launched in September 2005. We firmly believe that a strong combination of design, architecture and urban development contributes directly to the quality of life in Montréal, highlights the sense of pride of Montrealers, as well as the interest of visitors and investors.

Montréal is a city where design and designers, be they involved in the fields of interior, industrial, graphic, fashion or architectural design, represent a dynamic force of cultural and economic life. According to recent statistics, design is responsible for 20,356 jobs in Montréal's metropolitan area and economic spin-offs of more than \$750 million. Also, 65.3% of Québec workers involved in the field of design live in the metropolitan area. Montréal is the only North American city to have established, as early as 1991, a bureau dedicated exclusively to the development and promotion of design. Important achievements are owed to this bureau, including the Commerce Design Montréal competition, which has contributed to the rise of Montréal as a city of design.

Montréal is clearly part of the network of cities of knowledge in the field of design with four universities teaching design, architecture and urban planning, as well as five university research chairs in those fields. Montréal is also home to a rich network of high-level establishments dedicated to the promotion and dissemination of design, including the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Centre de design de l'UQAM, as well as the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts with its decorative arts collection. Montréal is also home to numerous design-related events, several of which occur in May, referred to as Design Month. They include the Montréal International Interior Design Show and the Gala des prix de l'Institut de Design Montréal.

According to the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Matsuura, "This distinction integrates Montréal into a network whose aim is to energize and share with as many cities around the world as possible the successful experience of design in cities. I truly hope that it will motivate emerging designers and inspire many other similar experiences. "

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