



Mohamed Lachemi
President and Vice-Chancellor

April 8, 2024

To: Toronto City Council

RE: Supporting a Barrier-Free Long-Term Land Lease with the Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation for City-Owned Land

Dear Mayor Chow and Councillors,

I am writing to you in support of the Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation (SCCR)'s request for a long-term land lease with the City of Toronto. The project led by SCCR will build an important place of belonging for the Somali community, one of Canada's largest Black communities. This will be an important public space that will be a focal point for Somali creativity, community work, recreation, and for archiving Somali culture and heritage in Canada.

As someone born and raised in Africa, I am delighted to see African culture brought to the forefront of our city. The SCCR provides an opportunity to showcase and celebrate African culture, sharing it with our city first-hand. This deliberate practice of inclusion by preserving culture and heritage adds to the richness of our city - one that is recognized globally for championing and celebrating diversity as a strength.

I hope that you will support the SCCR and demonstrate the City's unwavering commitment to barrier-free investments in Black-led social infrastructure projects.

Sincerely,

Mohamed Lachemi
President and Vice-Chancellor