

November 4, 2005

FPT STRATEGIC DIRECTION ON IMMIGRATION

Preamble

Canada's success in the eyes of the world owes much to the skill, hard work and dedication of immigrants and refugees. Immigration has provided Canada with new ideas and skills that have strengthened our communities and our abilities to innovate both locally and in the global marketplace. Immigration has also increased our respect for cultural diversity and contributed to understanding between peoples.

Increasingly, countries and communities are competing globally to attract investments, skills and talents. Looking to the future, Canada must better connect with the energy and contribution of immigrants to help meet the challenges of tomorrow including our ageing population and the country's local, regional and sectoral labour market needs.

Vision Statement

Guided by a tradition of welcoming immigrants and refugees, Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments will work collaboratively to promote Canada as an attractive destination for immigrants. In addition, they will develop and deliver programs that enable refugees and immigrants to maximise their opportunities and contributions, in every region of the country, while ensuring Canada's national security and economic vitality in a global economy.

Principles

In working to achieve this Vision, Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments agree to* :

- work collaboratively in areas of common interest and shared jurisdiction, including reaching out to interested stakeholders through joint consultation where appropriate;
- respect each jurisdiction's roles and responsibilities, including the responsibilities of Quebec identified under the Canada-Quebec Accord and other existing agreements; and
- work collaboratively to preserve Canada's national security.

*Although it is not participating in the initiative being proposed, Quebec recognizes the federal, provincial and territorial governments' effort. Their initiative quite closely resembles Quebec's positions on those matters, as expressed in its 2004–07 Action Plan, *Shared Values, Common Interests* (This document is available on the website of the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles). That plan complies with Quebec's powers and responsibilities under the Canada-Quebec Accord relating to

immigration and the admission of temporary residents. Quebec will continue to share its best practices with other provinces and territories.

Goals/Objectives

In order to achieve this vision Ministers agree upon the following goals and objectives:

- **Economic Growth and Prosperity:** contributing to Canada's economic prosperity by ensuring that the immigration program is responsive to national and local labour market needs, and by more effectively attracting skilled and successful immigrants in a dynamic and competitive international environment.
- **Strengthening the Social Fabric:** promoting the reunification of families which strengthens immigrants' contribution to economic, social and cultural life in Canada and its regions.
- **Supporting Canada's international humanitarian traditions:** focusing Canada's refugee protection efforts where the need is greatest, including affirming Canada's commitment to international efforts to provide assistance to those in need of resettlement.
- **Improved Outcomes for Immigrants:** strengthening the partnerships and programs needed to ensure the successful social and economic integration of immigrants, while helping to maximize their skills and contribution.
- **Prompt and Efficient Service to Clients:** moving to a client-centred model that adequately and appropriately responds to the interests of all concerned (immigrants, communities, employers). Enhancing the delivery and development of programs so that they are responsive and adaptable to the changing global environment (including changes in technology) and contribute to Canada's economic and social development and to our cultural vitality.
- **Retention and Regionalization:** supporting the efforts of all interested jurisdictions in attracting and retaining immigrants to help meet their communities' particular needs.
- **Strengthening Canada's defining linguistic characteristics:** responding to the needs identified by minority official languages communities in Canada, as appropriate in each jurisdiction.

Priorities

In working to achieve these objectives, while respecting the underlying principles, the following priorities exist that can be pursued jointly, or led individually.

Improved Selection

Multi-year levels planning

Development of an in-Canada economic class

Issues of mix

- o Addressing the particular needs of local labour markets.
- o Targeting highly qualified persons, graduate students, skilled trades and temporary workers

Promotion and recruitment

- o A more aggressive and effective international promotion of Canada, and all its regions, as a destination of choice

Improved Outcomes for Immigrants

- Maximizing the utilization of immigrant skills
- Revitalizing the funding model for settlement allocations
- Improving pre and post-arrival information on Canada and its regions to enhance attraction, integration and retention strategies

Increased Regionalization:

- Developing initiatives and regional strategies so that local economies are better able to tap the benefits of immigration

Improved Client Service

- Timely and responsive processing
- Improved inventory management
- Shorter waiting times
- Streamlining the in-Canada refugee determination system