



Canadian Heritage Patrimoine canadien  
Multiculturalism Multiculturalisme



**CANADA 2017**

**Serving Canada's Multicultural Population  
for the Future**

**POLICY FORUM**

**Canadian Heritage  
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## Opening Plenary

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### Opening Prayer

Elder Irene Lindsay, from the Cree Nation, offered the opening prayer and welcomed participants to the Algonquin territory. She thanked the Creator for the beautiful day, and asked participants to honour and respect one another. “You are the front line workers—the decision makers,” she said. “This discussion is very important to our nation. For years, we have been separated from each other. Now we are talking, trying to make the best choices for our people.” She encouraged participants to follow their daily spiritual journey that begins in the east and travels to the west, and stressed the importance of remembering those who are needy or less fortunate during the Forum’s deliberations.

### Introduction

#### **Judith A. LaRocque, Deputy Minister, Canadian Heritage**

Judith A. LaRocque, Deputy Minister, Canadian Heritage, opened the Forum by welcoming participants to the Canada 2017 Policy Forum. She began by stating that the Forum brings together representatives from both government and civil society in order to ensure that current and future government policies and programs will be relevant and reflective of the Canada of tomorrow. The Multiculturalism Program at the Department of Canadian Heritage partnered with Statistics Canada to launch the Canada 2017 initiative, designed to help determine the future demographic landscape of Canada. “Diversity is at the centre of the anticipated change,” said Ms. LaRocque. Canada has witnessed a steady increase in the number of its visible minorities, who accounted for approximately 6% of the population in 1986. By 2017, visible minorities will account for approximately 20% of the population. This change has significant ramifications for multicultural access to health, social services, employment, and a host of programs.

“This is our opportunity to be at the forefront by anticipating change,” said Ms. LaRocque. Canada wants to develop policies and programs that respond to the changing needs of its citizens.

## Opening Remarks

### The Honourable Raymond Chan, Minister of State (Multiculturalism)

“With the diversity we face on this earth, I thought it so appropriate to begin with the Elder’s prayer reminding us to respect everyone,” said the Honourable Raymond Chan, Minister of State (Multiculturalism). “We should repeat the prayer daily.”

This Policy Forum is unprecedented, noted the Minister. Governments traditionally use existing census data in their planning. This Forum is about seeking a different way—a better way—to anticipate the face of Canada by the year 2017, which is Canada’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation. With the support of the Multiculturalism Program, Statistics Canada developed projections based on current data from the 1996 and 2000 censuses. Canada seeks to foster a society that recognizes and respects a diversity of cultures, so that people from all backgrounds feel at home. It envisions a just society, in which everyone is treated fairly and equitably. Finally, it wants to ensure that all Canadians have the opportunity and capacity to participate in shaping the country, whereby seeing themselves reflected in its stories.

The goal of this Forum is to generate a horizontal response to the Canada of tomorrow, said the Minister. Time is of the essence—the anticipated changes will have a profound impact on Canada, changing its landscape and many facets of its workforce. Canada was ahead of its time in initiating multiculturalism more than 30 years ago, and today wants to create a country in which people—regardless of ethnic background—will achieve full participation in a diverse society.

Today, visible minorities account for 37% of the population in Toronto, and 36% of the population of Vancouver. This Forum will allow Canada to lay the foundation for future public policy. “Be as innovative as possible,” he encouraged participants, “—just as we were when we adopted Canada’s Multiculturalism Policy. This is an exciting opportunity. Embrace it and give free rein to your imagination,” said Minister Chan.

The business sector, particularly in large urban areas, has responded well to the changing face of Canada. It is possible to obtain services in many languages. In comparison, the federal government lags somewhat behind, “so it is important for all of us here today to make sure we are prepared for 2017,” concluded Minister Chan.

## Setting the Stage

### Ivan Fellegi, Chief Statistician of Canada, Statistics Canada

“Having arrived in this country as an immigrant, I certainly love the idea of this conference,” said Ivan Fellegi. “There are not too many countries in which an immigrant could reach positions of authority after not too many years of being here.”

The data Mr. Fellegi presented were officially released earlier in the morning. He cautioned, however, that much of what was to be discussed was based on projections and assumptions.

“Everything starts with birth,” he said, “or in this case, with the lack of birth.” During the 1990s, the natural population increase due to births was surpassed by immigration. If Canada continues with present immigration rates, immigration will represent its whole source of growth, as natural growth becomes negative. Fellegi noted that one group—Aboriginals—has a high rate of birth, but its overall demographic rate is too small to have a significant impact on national statistics. However, it will lead to higher growth rates in certain regions.

The greatest proportion of immigrants is concentrated in the major cities, particularly in Toronto and Vancouver, and to a lesser extent, in Montréal. Immigration to the rest of Canada is decreasing. “This will have enormous impact on the economic, demographic, and political situation in Canada if these projections for Toronto and Vancouver are right,” noted Mr. Fellegi. Another change is in the composition of the immigrant population. With each census, the proportion of immigrants from Europe has decreased. The greatest proportion now comes from Asia and the Middle East, with a significant number coming from South and Central America and the Caribbean, as well as from Africa. Many of these new immigrants are allophones and are from visible minorities. By 2017, approximately 20% of Canadians will be visible minorities, with much higher concentrations of visible minorities in the largest centres. As a result, the term “visible minority” will become laughable, noted Mr. Fellegi. “The ‘visible majority’ in Toronto will be the minority. The terminology will have to be adapted.”

Before 1970, over half of immigrants to Canada spoke English or French as their mother tongue. Today, fewer than 20% of immigrants do. The growth is quite uneven as well. The numbers of South Asian and Chinese immigrants are increasing rapidly. Along with these trends go anticipated changes in the religious affiliation of immigrants, with huge increases expected in the proportion of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs.

“Associated with these trends are some troubling issues,” said Mr. Fellegi. For example, certain immigrant populations tend to concentrate in certain neighbourhoods. Given that some of these neighbourhoods are characterized by high unemployment and low income, the resulting social interaction might represent a barrier.

Canada's labour market increasingly demands higher levels of education, and the gap is widening between the jobs that require university or college education and the percentage of young Canadians graduating. Immigrants are arriving with higher and higher levels of education—at times higher than the level of Canadians—but despite this, are not doing as well as one might expect and still face significant barriers to full employment. It takes approximately 10 years for the earnings of immigrants to reach the Canadian average. Each group arriving starts at a lower income level and takes longer to reach the Canadian average, with the exception of a blip for those arriving in 1996. Those who arrive as economic immigrants fare better than those who arrive as refugees or under family reunification programs. Those who arrive with university education do better than those without, and those who arrive speaking English or French do better than allophones who arrive.

“The troubling part of the story is the annual earnings for third-generation immigrants,” noted Fellegi. Second-generation immigrants outperform them. “It is a hopeful sign that although immigrants may not do terribly well, their children do very well.”

Immigrant children whose mother tongue is other than French or English initially score far below Canadian-born children in reading, writing, and math. However, by the time they reach the age of 10 or 11, they overtake Canadian-born children. “The Canadian school system seems to be doing something quite well,” observed Fellegi. Another hopeful sign is the correlation between the earnings of fathers and sons when the latter reach earning age. Social mobility is much better in Canada than it is in the United States or the United Kingdom, where the potential earnings of a child are highly correlated with his or her parent's income.

Visible minorities represent 15% of the Canadian population aged 15–24, but have a university graduation rate of twice that. Certain professions—most notably math, computer and information sciences, and architecture and engineering—have twice the proportion of visible minorities. The numbers are even higher for “prestige” professions such as medicine and dentistry: close to 30% and 35% of the graduating classes respectively comprise visible minorities. However, Fellegi cautioned that visible minorities are not a homogeneous group. Latin Americans and Blacks are under-represented among university graduates .

The final part of Fellegi's presentation focused on social cohesion and social inclusion. Statistics Canada tracked immigrants for several years after their arrival. The main reasons given for problems finding employment were lack of Canadian experience, difficulty transferring foreign qualifications, and language barriers. The high cost of housing was cited as a reason for difficulty finding housing, and accessing health services was also problematic.

Ninety-five per cent of the non-visible minorities, and 80% of visible minorities stated that they had rarely or never experienced discrimination. The 20% that did experience discrimination said that it was because of language, religion, ethnicity, or culture. They reported being discriminated against when applying for a job or getting a promotion. The

actual number of hate crimes reported to the police is 3 per 10,000, representing a tiny proportion of all crimes. Most have to do with race or ethnicity.

Finally, hopeful signs predominate, said Fellegi, noting, "Immigrants in Canada become Canadians very quickly after their arrival."

### **Questions and Comments**

A participant disagreed with Fellegi's comment about immigrants congregating in certain neighbourhoods, saying that "it's not the concentration per se that's the problem, it's the access to social services, education, etc." She suggested injecting more money into these areas.

Another participant said that the statistics on educational attainment are misleading. He stated that the dropout rate among ESL students is far too high. He asserted that the federal government and school boards are not responding to children and youth.

Several participants voiced concern about the way in which certain categories of immigrants are broken down. In particular, Canadians of African descent are racially categorized, while other immigrants are represented by country. Fellegi replied that some of the categories come from the *Employment Equity Act*. He agreed that variations within any one group are at least as large as the similarities.

Professionals coming to Canada are often prohibited from finding appropriate jobs by the professional associations, said a participant. She acknowledged that language often presents a barrier and asked if statistics are available to support this assumption. Fellegi replied that this would be better suited to a case study than to a statistical analysis.

### **Serving a Multicultural Population: Challenges and Opportunities**

**France Pelletier, Manager, Employment Equity and Diversity, National Bank of Canada**

The National Bank must change its strategies to adapt to the diversity of its clients and employees, stated France Pelletier, Manager of Employment Equity and Diversity. Headquartered in Montréal, the Bank was founded in 1859. It now finds that business challenges are getting more complex, and it needs people who speak several languages, are innovative, and have new skills. In addition, the shortage of qualified workers is intensifying in some sectors.

By 2017, the aging population will shrink the pool of qualified workers, contributing to the shortage of skilled workers. One hundred per cent of the growth for Canada's workforce will have to come from immigration. In addition, one in five Canadians will be a visible minority. It is important to begin now ensuring that new workers are from a

variety of ethnocultural groups, said Pelletier. An ability to speak different languages will be an asset.

Diversity is not just a soft file—it's not just an HR issue. More than ever, the Bank needs to hire the most talented people possible. When there was no labour shortage, the Bank could hire through the "old boy's club," noted Pelletier. The changing face of society means that the Bank must now be more inclusive.

Worker loyalty has also changed. Retaining skilled young workers is more difficult. Pelletier noted that the employer no longer holds "the big end of the stick"—something that is important to think about when hiring.

The *Employment Equity Act* frames federal employment. Some people object to the notion of quotas as opposed to hiring on merit, but a law was necessary to address inequities, said Pelletier. Today, most people want to be hired on their own merit. Pelletier stressed the importance of highlighting the added value that people from different ethnocultural backgrounds bring to the job.

Intercultural communication can create misinterpretations, so it is important to incorporate sensitivity training

Populations change faster than the image of a business changes, noted Pelletier. Employees at the National Bank told management that the Bank was seen as a French, Québec, White institution. Young people and those from visible minorities did not feel welcome. The Bank is aggressively moving to change this image, and is involving marketing representatives in the change. A recent advertisement for mortgages depicted a mixed-race couple buying their own home. In the end, a few clients phoned to complain that the National Bank was supporting inter-racial marriages. Pelletier stressed that the Bank's advertising campaigns would represent the constituency it serves.

Religion, language, and overqualified workers all present additional barriers. Some employees require sensitivity training to understand the importance of religious leave. Overqualified workers can create an impact on retention if they are unhappy.

A business reflects society, said Pelletier. The first step to overcoming prejudice is to be aware that it exists. Companies can then help minority groups become part of their business. The Bank is focusing on developing strategies that will ensure equity from the outset, from hiring through to pay scales, to promotion, and to retention. It is also important to ensure that senior personnel are committed to this vision, and recognize the contribution that a diversified workforce can bring.

Finally, said Pelletier, the Bank needs to adapt for tomorrow. If it does not start today to develop the employees and managers for tomorrow, it will not be able to survive. It will not be able to attract and retain the highly skilled workers it requires, and will lose its market share. The Bank needs to create an environment in which visible minorities and



different ethnocultural groups feel comfortable, and needs to build on a diversified workforce that is growing in leaps and bounds.

### **Questions and Comments**

A participant asked about the number of visible minority employees at the National Bank, and about reasonable accommodation. Pelletier replied that among senior management, the number of visible minorities in the Toronto branch rose to 27% from 10% one year ago. Today, 45% of the auxiliary staff in Toronto are visible minorities. In Montréal, the combined total of visible minorities is 12–15%, a growth of 20% in the last year. The Bank has a policy for the accommodation of women, visible minorities, and those with handicaps. Some of the accommodations have required training so that staff and managers understand that it is not a privilege to leave work early on Friday for religious reasons—that the employee must make up the time off.

Asked about risk assessment, Pelletier said that there is no risk to having visible minorities in senior management. Quite the opposite: the new personnel are helping the Bank develop a larger perspective.

Several participants congratulated Pelletier and the National Bank for its campaign to diversify its workforce. One commented that overqualified personnel should be seen as an asset.

### **Panel 1: Cities**

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**Chair: Pablo Sobrino, Regional Executive Director, Canadian Heritage**

#### **Panel Presentation**

Canada is becoming increasingly diverse and dependent on immigration for economic growth, said session Chair Pablo Sobrino. As urban areas grow, rural areas are becoming depopulated and the two communities are beginning to look different. As urban Canada becomes more diverse, “are we creating two Canadas instead of one?”

This session is not just about cities, said Sobrino—it is about communities. One paradox of globalization is that, although one can work from anywhere in the knowledge economy, “place matters...it does matter where you live, what your community looks like and where your social networks are.” People matter too: human capital makes cities energetic and creates social networks.

Commenting on the multidimensional nature of population changes, Sobrino highlighted the need for a four-pillar approach in preparing for demographic change, an approach that addresses economic, social, environmental, and cultural factors. How can communities

prepare for change across these four pillars? He noted that there is a “disconnect” between Canada’s success in attracting immigrants and the level of outreach done to ensure that immigrants feel a sense of “shared citizenship.” How can governments help immigrants to forge an identity in their new communities?

Sobrinho also commented on the need to forge horizontal relationships among all levels of government and between federal departments.

**Fo Niemi**, President of the Centre for Research-Action on Race Relations, suggested that when discussing urban communities, the focus should shift from the nation-state to the city-state. With the reduction of political and economic frontiers, cities are becoming poles of attraction for immigration. Along with the continued development of communications technologies, how will this trend affect cities over the next 10 years? This issue goes beyond migration in the context of multicultural diversity and immigration.

He added that the economic gap between different classes has a greater impact than cultural differences but is often not taken into account in debates. Another issue to consider is the generational gap: policymakers must think outside the box when addressing this issue, because they have a tendency to limit their conceptual framework to the ethnocultural regime.

Well-educated people tend to go where there is economic opportunity, Niemi noted. Free trade regulations that allow for greater labour mobility have an impact on immigration and must be considered in addition to the focus on industries and economic development.

**Dan Hiebert** of the University of British Columbia explained that immigration patterns have intersected with other broad social transformations occurring in Canada. These include economic restructuring, the rise of high-order services, an increase in social polarization, changes in the composition of family units, urban change, gentrification, and new forms of suburbanization.

One key trend is the tremendous growth of immigrant settlement in suburban locations. Are these new suburban immigrant landscapes examples of cultural mixing or are they new forms of ghettoization? The answer may depend on the group being discussed: different groups are doing different things. However, the degree of ethnocultural concentration in Canadian cities is much less than assumed (for example, it is less than in the U.S.). Concentrations include diverse ethnocultural groups (very few single groups) and mixed populations in terms of income. Also, the concentrations are emerging in the suburbs, where populations are not facing other aspects or characteristics of deprivation.

Based on these factors, Hiebert concluded that concentration is not the problem; instead, policymakers should focus on the issue of marginalization. Issues of diversity and equity and new socio-economic dynamics seem related to an increasing degree of

marginalization among immigrants. Many visible minorities experience similar problems as immigrants.

Noting that some areas in larger cities will have populations that are 80–100% per cent immigrant, Hiebert asked, “Will these be landscapes of poverty?” To prevent this from happening, policies are needed to ensure that the proportion of low-income immigrants is reduced. General policies should address fairness in the labour market, language acquisition, and housing, while social policies should address policies that foster enhanced civility. Municipal governments should be more proactive in their outreach to multicultural populations. Policymakers need to adjust planning mindsets, which have developed out of European models. They also need to understand new geographies of need and the intersection of class and minority status.

Two very positive signs are the breadth and depth of Canadian civil society, including a high degree of volunteerism. Hiebert also emphasized the favourable public opinion in Canada regarding immigration. This means that planners, NGOs, and other levels of government do not have to struggle against a skeptical public. Resolving issues of equity takes a coordinated commitment, he concluded, but at least this work can be done in a climate of understanding.

**Jean Lambert**, an analyst for the Rural Secretariat at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (Atlantic Region), described the Canadian Rural Partnership, which involves federal-provincial teams working for rural development through dialogue with rural Canadians. The main challenge, he said, is to ensure that the silos are connected and communicating.

About 21% of Canada's population is rural, said Lambert. This includes coastal and remote areas. The proportion of the population that is rural varies among provinces.

Canada's rural population is considerably less diverse than its urban population, with immigrants representing only 5% of the rural population; however, this amounts to 300,000 people—a significant number of people who require support. Visible minorities aged 13 and over represent a relatively small percentage of the population in small urban and rural areas. About 7.7% of rural people speak a language other than Canada's two official languages (compared to 20.1% of the urban population).

A key challenge for rural communities is the urbanization of Canada and the consequent loss of population. In most cases, it is the younger people who are leaving rural areas. Greater ethnocultural diversity and immigration to rural areas do not comprise a miracle solution, but they do play an important role in revitalizing rural areas.

Communities are the cornerstones of these efforts, and rural communities will come up with their own solutions to increase diversity. Governments must support rural communities without imposing solutions: these communities need to recognize for themselves the added value of diversity.

Lambert discussed a project started in 2003 to address the depopulation of rural areas in Atlantic Canada by retaining youth, increasing immigration, and bringing back people who had migrated to cities for economic reasons. This initiative resulted in four projects spearheaded by local communities. A project in Florenceville, New Brunswick focuses on encouraging harmonious relations among ethnocultural groups and sensitizing the community to multiculturalism. Another project in St. Léonard, New Brunswick supports immigrants in their integration into the community. In Colchester, Nova Scotia, a local economic development organization works with immigrants to re-unite families. In addition, the Nova Scotia provincial government has recommended the establishment of an immigration office and an immigration strategy.

### **Facilitated Discussion**

This session provided participants an opportunity to assess and analyze the implications of the future demographic landscape of Canada on cities.

Before breaking into small study groups to address specific questions, Panel Chair Pablo Sobrino invited questions from participants to the panel members.

Several participants raised the issue of an aging immigrant population. Statistics Canada's report *Population projections of visible minority groups, Canada, provinces and regions 2001–2017* indicates that the visible minority population, as a whole, will be noticeably younger by 2017. However, participants pointed out that a primarily younger population does eventually and inevitably age. In addition, many individuals bring their elderly parents. A number of issues, including problems of enormous discontinuity, relate to foreign-born populations. "The more urban they are, the more suburban they are," noted a participant.

Research carried out by the University of Waterloo examined the issue of housebound, East Asian seniors who are without any other language or cultural experience. Many spend their days at home as babysitters.

Dan Hiebert, University of British Columbia, shared the results of two recent studies. One study showed that there was a significant distance "drop off" in terms of individuals using service agencies. Some "excellent social services agencies" that had been created in the 1970s were being well utilized by the local population, but not so much by those who lived in the suburbs and those who were housebound.

Hiebert also pointed out that it was difficult to get a reading on homeless immigrants. Research to date indicates that informal immigrant systems of support are making the homeless crisis for immigrants virtually invisible—for example, there is little evidence of this crisis in Vancouver. Individuals are temporarily sheltered in other people's homes. Hiebert suggested that as people age, this type of informal invisible support will likely continue; individuals will be taken care of in small-scale settings. The crisis may not be noticed as it is happening, and that will be a problem.

Hiebert responded to a question regarding civility and how to enable cultural continuity while building extensions into the larger community. He described a current study of Vancouver's "neighbourhood houses" which examines day-to-day interactions and how cross-cultural interactions occur and are fostered. These neighbourhood houses are like mini-institutions at the local level; there are currently twenty-five of them in the City of Vancouver. They operate through a combination of volunteer efforts and local government funding. The study is examining decisionmaking processes, cross-cultural communication, and partnership development in the neighbourhood houses.

Hiebert indicated that there is a need to address the issue of homelessness at a national level. A consensus is needed among business, the voluntary, and public sectors, and the civil sector. Certain forms of expenditure need to be determined. The ratio of program spending by GDP has reduced tremendously. In the 1980s, Canada had one of the highest ratios of spending of the G7 countries. Now, it is the second lowest in terms of ratio of program spending by GDP. Affordable housing is one of the issues that have fallen by the wayside.

Sobrinó pointed out that there had been a lot of discussion about the role of the federal government. There had been a discussion on diversity, and the difference between new arrivals to Canada and Canadian born. He identified the issue of the demographic revolution that is occurring among Aboriginal Canadians, and the movement to larger centres. "How are we going to deal with Aboriginals and the cultural diversity that they represent?" he asked, before pointing out the need to break down the silos and see a multi-ethnic community.

Sobrinó noted the issue of quality of life in urban areas, particularly urban safety and security. Urban safety and security is an idea that is strongly tied to racial diversity and cultural diversity; more and more people are talking about feelings of safety. An aging White population, together with a strong young minority presence, can lead to the perception of security issues. Sobrinó noted the impact on urban social programs and inter-governmental solutions. A youth safety strategy in Toronto involved the business sector. In Montréal, there are challenges in terms of provincial versus municipal jurisdictions.

There is also the question of diversity in the urban context and how the concentration of people will result in reforming the electoral districts and school boards. Sobrinó asked, "How do we ensure it will not affect full participation and citizenship?" He also questioned how to ensure a relatively fair or uniform degree of participation in a city like Montréal, which is characterized by economic disparity. Race, culture, colour, and gender present great challenges for city planners and public policymakers alike.

Five questions were outlined on flip charts; participants chose their questions and began discussions.

**Will immigration and a more diverse population help repopulate rural areas and small communities? How?**

Market forces can be a driving force: immigrants will go where the jobs are. Policymakers need to create economic conditions and incentives for people to choose rural areas (e.g. offering land to attract immigrants to rural areas). When people don't own their own land, they are more likely to leave rural areas, leaving room for private developers to come in.

The rural/urban divide will deepen without federal intervention. This would result in "two Canadas": the old rural Canada and a new urban Canada. There is a need for an "urban-rural secretariat"—a federal focus on rural repopulation, tied into immigrant strategy.

A number of economic initiatives would help in attracting immigrants to rural areas. The federal government (the largest employer in Canada) could locate offices in rural areas across Canada. The resulting infrastructure would attract immigrants. Recognition of foreign credentials would help in repopulating rural areas, and would also help to address the doctor shortage. The current tendency to move away from the trades could lead to gaps that could be addressed by encouraging immigrants to go into these areas. Finally, agriculture is a field where innovation could be increased by involving immigrants with agricultural backgrounds.

Federal, provincial, and municipal governments must work together, across jurisdictions. The federal government should make multiculturalism a horizontal, government-wide initiative. Each province should play a larger role in immigration by developing provincial policies to attract immigrants to rural communities. In addition, rural areas must build consensus on the need to attract immigrants.

**Is class as important as ethnocultural diversity when thinking about marginalization? How does the federal government align its policies to address this?**

This group concluded that diversity should be defined much more broadly and should not be limited to ethnocultural diversity. A broader definition of diversity would include issues of class and other concerns related to marginalization. It would then be easier to see whether there was significant overlap between ethnocultural background and poverty or marginalization.

Flexible policies are important because of the many types of diversity at play. For example, smaller cities may wish to attract immigration, while larger cities are already experiencing it. Federal policy should be tied to program dollars, with a flexible approach that would enable cities to access funding that would support initiatives in specific areas.

How many of the issues around marginalization can be addressed through policy, and how many require education? One question to consider is how to guarantee civic access

and participation in all cities. The federal government has a role in ensuring consistency, yet there are jurisdictional issues that could block a federal policy regarding municipal-level consultation. How could Canada ensure a more uniform approach so that all Canadians have opportunities to participate in civic life?

Language is often a barrier for newcomers: federal policies could have an impact in this area.

The federal government also plays an important role in messaging and leading by example. For example, Canada's Multiculturalism Policy does not have enforcement measures, but does have an impact throughout the education system.

Exclusion and marginalization affects everyone in some way, so it is important to seek common ground. By looking at diversity broadly, policymakers would find policies to create a more inclusive society for all people.

**How do we integrate the four pillars of sustainability (economic, cultural, social, environmental) in developing strategies of inclusion?**

Inclusion means connecting people with services provided by federal, provincial, and municipal governments.

A key observation in this group was the need for a national vision. There is a need for institutional change: leadership needs to adapt and develop a vision. This should include proper consultation of cities, which can develop better services and programs if they can be involved at the policy level (federally). Mechanisms to achieve the common federal vision need to be shared across government. The goal should be sustainability of results and concrete implementation.

Infrastructure Canada's vision for investing in infrastructure should include the human dimension of needs, and should go beyond the "bottom line."

Of the four pillars (equality, inclusion, access, and economics), the economic pillar has been the primary focus to date. There is a need to refocus on the other three pillars. Cities must have a vision that addresses all pillars. Inclusion is an important factor in order to get feedback from stakeholders.

Cities need federal dollars to help build infrastructure and ensure integration of immigrants.

It will be important to address the mechanics of an implementation strategy: How can federal officials coordinate before going to the communities? The process should start with an action plan at the federal level—but how can the communities initiate this?

Finally, the group addressed issues of federal accountability: each department has its own indicators, measurements, and deliverables. There is a need for action plans to define the role of each department. Who should play the leadership role?

**What are the implications of a normative ideal of urban citizenship—to enhance cultural understanding? How does this work in urban and rural contexts?**

Focusing on the concept of citizenship, the group discussed several themes:

- Access: At what point does access shift to questions of motivation?
- Expectations: Individuals, groups, and different levels of government need to articulate expectations clearly.
- Responsibility: What are the roles of different levels of government?
- Jurisdiction: When does the responsibility shift from government to communities to individuals?
- Civic literacy: To participate, one needs certain skills, information, and behaviours. Civic behaviours include political engagement and volunteerism.

**Concluding remarks**

Pablo Sobrino concluded the session with a brief summary of some of the main themes that had arisen. The question of jurisdiction was a key factor, with observations about the roles at different levels of government and how fluid those responsibilities function.

Another key point was that the federal government can assist in the challenges and opportunities facing rural Canada, by changing the makeup of the workforce in rural areas, and by moving pieces of the federal government to rural areas. Is this still an effective tool?

In addition, he asked, how can Canada use the immigration population to add a set of skills that might be missing (e.g. using skilled workers to fill the gap in rural areas).

Another key factor with regard to cities is “complexity”: The federal government does not have the solution, but the role of the community and its need to be heard are key factors.

**Panel 2: Labour Markets**

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**Chair: Ajit Mehat, Director General, Labour, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada**



## Panel Presentation

Ajit Mehat, Director General, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, indicated that the panel would focus on labour market supply and demand in addition to economic opportunity. Mehat noted that in a growing knowledge economy, both the quantity of human capital and the quality of labour skills are critical to sustaining a vibrant and productive foundation to Canada's economy.

Canada's current challenges to managing a labour force of 16 million, include mounting labour scarcity, a growing need for more skilled people, accelerated international labour force competition owing to globalization, and a demand for greater business innovation acquired from a diversity of viewpoints.

With 20 years of effort surrounding the *Employment Equity Act*, Mehat noted that Canada has a good legal and policy framework for removing systemic workplace barriers. However, as demonstrated by the 2003 Ethnic Diversity Survey, more must be done to curb the rising trend of racial discrimination at work or when applying for a job or promotion.

Drawing on Krishna Pendakur's paper, Mehat noted that visible minorities will become the majority in major urban centres in 2017, yet may lack attendant increases in labour market outcomes. Mehat asserted that power relationships and control of resources remain important issues to address. The federal government is developing several key initiatives designed to reduce labour costs, increase employee retention rates, advance productivity, and promote a strong economy. These include improving the labour market integration of skilled immigrants and foreign-trained Canadians, improving the health and economic prosperity of cities, and a commitment to equality of opportunity, foreign credential recognition, fair compensation, and respect.

To assist in meeting the challenge of visible minority labour market integration, Mehat acknowledged the March 21st, 2005 announcement of a five year, \$56 million investment in *A Canada for All: Canada's Action Plan Against Racism*. The *Action Plan*—a collaborative effort between the Ministers of State (Multiculturalism), Labour, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and Justice—marks one of only a few cross-Cabinet collaborations in the history of Canada to address racism.

**Krishna Pendakur**, Simon Fraser University, presented his paper *Visible Minorities in Canada's Workplaces: A Perspective on the 2017 Projection*. Pendakur asked whether visible minorities had "gained ground" between 1970 and 2000. When comparing the earnings differential between Canadian-born visible minorities and Canadian-born people of European origin in Montréal, Toronto, Vancouver, and Canada as a whole, the data suggest that visible minorities have not gained ground since the 1970s. In fact, with the exception of Vancouver, the wage disparity between visible minority and European origin men and women increased between 1970 and 2000.

Do visible minorities have homogeneous labour market experiences? No—Pendakur indicated that visible minorities have inhomogeneous experiences. There are differences in experiences between men and women within cities. There are also variations by ethnocultural group: Hispanic, Black/Caribbean, South Asian, and Arab/West Asian workers earn much less than their white counterparts, while Chinese employees earn about the same as their white counterparts.

Will the economic outcomes of visible minorities improve? Pendakur's pessimistic view is that the trend will worsen over time and that the *Employment Equity Act* will not produce labour market improvements for visible minorities.

Pendakur's optimistic view is that the situation is hopeful in concentrated areas of visible minorities such as Toronto and Vancouver, where large communities may be self-protecting or self-promoting. In these centres, the earnings differential is narrower and has closed slightly since 1996. Also, he noted that ethnicity influences job and education preferences. Furthermore, multiple-origin visible minorities—whose population is growing owing to intermarriage—fare better than single-origin visible minorities with respect to earnings. Multiple-origin visible minorities do not tend to earn less than their white counterparts.

Pendakur concluded by advocating for a society in which differences in preferences and aspirations are tolerated, whereas differences in treatment are not. Acknowledging that these goals are not easy to achieve, he indicated that blunt policy tools are only suited to homogeneous targets, not a massively inhomogeneous visible minority population. Policy tools need to address the inhomogeneous nature of visible minorities in order to produce positive labour market outcomes.

**Bente Baklid**, from the Conference Board of Canada, invited workshop participants to visit its website to access copies of the Conference Board's recently released employer's tool—*Business Critical: Maximizing the Talents of Visible Minorities—An Employer's Guide*. (<http://www.conferenceboard.ca>). To help organizations make the necessary workplace changes, the Employer's Guide compiles successful practices from organizations that excel in diversity management.

Baklid noted that visible minorities greatly enhance Canada's economic life, and—from an organizational point of view—play an important role as both employees and consumers. Ensuring strong visible minority representation in the labour market, at all levels of society, will deliver three main benefits.

First, visible minorities will bring expanded global economic opportunities and business advantage through their foreign-born connections, cultural knowledge and understanding, language skills, and personal relationships. Baklid noted that fostering personal relationships is a central component of business opportunity development. For example, with a population of over one million people, the Chinese-Canadian community presents significant opportunities to Canadian businesses.

Second, a diverse workforce will improve relationships with customers, suppliers, and citizens by translating their understanding of current and future needs into opportunities and targeted services. The result will be greater satisfaction and loyalty among both clients and employees.

And third, diversity will enhance the ability of organizations to be creative and innovative. For example, a number of businesses engage minority advisory groups to create products that cater to specific ethnocultural groups.

In conclusion, Baklid indicated that visible minority representation is important to Canadian organizations, and that the dynamics of difference can bring great benefits to Canadian society as a whole.

**Ana Luisa Iturriaga**, Executive Director of Service des consultants en relations interculturelles Québec Multi-Plus, indicated that after 20 years of employment equity, there are still many barriers to equality of opportunity for immigrants and visible minorities—even for youth who hold Canadian diplomas.

For example, a foreign-sounding name may create cultural obstacles. In Montréal, since September 11, 2001, members of the Arab and Muslim communities have encountered many difficulties. Statistics show that individuals' country of origin can pose obstacles to employment, as do traditional clothing, cultural traits, and religious symbols and practices.

Communication and behavioural characteristics such as language, rhetoric, and speech patterns can also pose obstacles to employment; even the way individuals look at one another can create discomfort in a work environment. Iturriaga also noted that the public perception of immigrants can create favourable or unfavourable stereotypes. For example, statistics indicate that people of Chinese origin are perceived as hard workers, whereas people of African and Hispanic origin are not. It becomes imperative to realize that cultural values do differ and that respect, acceptance, and simply getting to know people with different ethnocultural backgrounds will take time.

Employment barriers can lead to culture shock, intolerance, prejudice, xenophobia, and even violence. Iturriaga added that the legal concept of violence has now been expanded to include psychological harassment.

Iturriaga also noted other obstacles to immigrant employment, namely the non-recognition of foreign credentials. These obstacles are more problematic in the knowledge economy; many immigrants are unable to find work in their fields and may be overqualified for the jobs that they currently hold.

In conclusion, Iturriaga suggested that employers need to step-up their efforts to change perceptions and combat discrimination. Immigrants must also strive to find ways to fit in to the Canadian social fabric.

## Facilitated Discussion

Krishna Pendakur clearly indicated that there is no conclusive proof that the *Employment Equity Act* contributes to a narrowing income differential between visible minority men and men of European origin. However, the data suggest that visible minority wages are higher in areas with significant concentrations of visible minorities, in particular Toronto and Vancouver.

Pendakur also stressed that the concentration of visible minorities can offer significant economic opportunities. He argued that outcomes for visible minorities will improve with higher rates of inter-ethnic marriage, integrated neighbourhoods, and diverse workplaces.

The participants were presented with four small group discussion questions. Approximately one half of the workshop participants addressed the first two questions.

### **Do changing ethnocultural demographics help or hinder visible minority integration and access to economic opportunities? How should we measure visible minority labour market integration? Does it mean earnings parity or equal occupational representation?**

Changing ethnocultural demographics both help and hinder visible minority integration and access to economic opportunities.

Urbanization works in favour of visible minority integration in the labour market. In large, diverse urban centres, Canadian businesses want to increase their visible minority representation in order to improve service to multicultural consumers and gain a competitive edge through connections to global clients.

This approach to workplace diversity facilitates the successful recruitment and retention of visible minorities. These businesses may become employers of choice for visible minority workers, especially where they are valued for their skills and talents and provided opportunities for advancement.

However, in the federal public civil service—where employment equity is mandated—occupational mobility is limited. For example, visible minorities are grossly underrepresented in the federal public service and few occupy executive level positions.

Visible minority women fair better; their rate of employment is higher than that of visible minority men.

Organizations must recognize the unique assets that diversity offers to their labour pool, in particular the knowledge of languages other than English or French. For example, a diverse labour pool helps enterprises to enhance access to overseas clients and cross-border business.

With regard to hindrances, multiple factors are simultaneously at play. Ethnic enclaves may isolate some visible minority individuals from Canadian society and impede their language acquisition, access to educational opportunities, and socio-economic mobility. Rural and urban demographic differences may also contribute to this problem. Another hindrance is the misperception that immigrants take jobs away from Canadians.

In order to accurately measure labour market integration, a more precise definition of the concept is required. Some measures may include length of time in Canada and occupational mobility—the levels at which visible minorities enter the labour market and the rate at which they progress within it.

When analyzing hiring trends, it is important to isolate other factors when considering a specific employment issue. For example, when assessing the impact of the *Employment Equity Act* on visible minority hiring, it is important to consider other factors such as cultural and social supports, access to help with integration, organizational culture, et cetera. It is also important to recognize that immigrants are not a homogeneous group; individuals have different educational backgrounds and work experience and these factors—among others—influence earning and occupational outcomes.

When labour market demand is low, personal suitability, even within the framework of employment equity, becomes an important factor in hiring. For example, Canadian-born visible minorities bring valuable social and cultural capital to the workforce. Visible minority allophones with proficient French and/or English can also bring valuable third language skills to Canada's labour market.

Labour market discrimination is a complex concept to measure because it is difficult to pinpoint—especially when it is not overt. Race, language ability, and accent are three attributes that produce discriminatory treatment. Nevertheless, when labour market demand is high, Canadians are more receptive to immigration. As the numerical representation of visible minorities increases over time, Canadians are likely to become more accepting of difference.

**Do existing policies, programs, and services effectively help visible minorities to overcome systemic barriers in the labour market? What policies, programs, and services are required—now and in the future—to ensure access to opportunities and the full participation of visible minorities in Canada's labour market?**

A non-exhaustive list of policies, programs, and services includes the *Employment Equity Act*, provincial human rights legislation (linked to several United Nations conventions), the *Multiculturalism Act*, the equality code of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, various settlement programs, and HRSDC's Prior Learning Assessment and Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) Programs.

There are, however, two main shortcomings to these initiatives. First, these programs need to address systemic racism and discrimination. They must identify and deal with the

root causes of problems and not focus solely on symptoms. To improve these programs there must be an open and informed discussion of racism as the underlying cause of inequality, and a greater understanding of why racism and discrimination are harmful to the economy. Second, how the programs are communicated and applied is sometimes inappropriate. The public needs to be made aware of Canada's evolving economic and immigration policies. Assistance should be provided to communities to help them become more aware of these programs and how to access them.

Moreover, rather than simply adding to existing programs, employers must incorporate diversity programming into their statement of principles and business plan. It must be stressed that immigrants do not take away jobs from Canadian born individuals; rather, they help to fill needs and develop the economy. The emphasis should be on employee competencies and the economic elasticity of the marketplace.

The existing Employment Equity framework, while important, is not well applied. A participant familiar with human resource procedures said that sectors under Employment Equity authority often hire simply to fill quotas. This is not integration—it is merely compliance—and visible minorities do not like it. They want to be hired for their skills and knowledge.

The benefits of diversity and multiculturalism to Canada's labour market have not been well explained. There is still much resistance on the part of employers and the population in general, who erroneously believe that immigrants are taking jobs away from Canadians.

A majority of positions within the federal government require bilingualism, and this represents a barrier to hiring, retention, and mobility of visible minorities whose mother tongue is neither English nor French.

It is recommended that a policy on foreign credential recognition be developed and implemented. For example, professional associations need assistance to become more inclusive. Public pressure, applied by professionals who pay membership fees to these associations, may help to bring about change.

A number of suggestions were put forth on how to improve visible minority access to Canada's labour market:

- Fix existing programs before creating new ones.
- Improve communication (dialogue, collaboration) between the federal and provincial governments.
- Simplify the Employment Equity reporting process to central agencies. Current tracking activity is too onerous, and takes resources away from implementation and analysis.
- Invest in public education. Many Canadians see immigration as a humanitarian activity, not an economic necessity. Canadians need to understand the economic impact (cost) of racism—i.e. the failure to maximize the potential of visible minority

workers' skills and knowledge—to Canada's economy. Develop awareness campaigns for television, in schools, and workplaces to get the message out that Canada's economic growth is tied to immigration.

- Develop and disseminate practical tools, i.e. best practices from all sectors.
- Identify and address the root causes of discrimination.
- Conduct research on the socio-economic costs of excluding visible minorities from the labour market.
- Make visible minority labour market exclusion a social indicator (as was done with child poverty) and the message will finally get through to the public.

Further, increased funding for research is critical to implementing socio-economic cost and impact analyses and laying the foundation for new programs. New social indicators are required, as well as a greater understanding of visible minorities as an inhomogeneous group and that race is a hierarchical construct. Practical tools and best practices are needed in both the public and private sectors. Finally, a concerted effort should be made to market messages to the public through public education strategies and campaigns that engage institutions such as schools, businesses, and the media.

### **How can Canada engage visible minorities to enhance Canada's competitiveness and productivity in the global market?**

Participants asked the questions “Does diversity have tangible impacts?” and “How do you create diversity?” One participant cited, as an unsuccessful example, efforts made by the government of Ontario to establish links with Italy. Despite Ontario's large Canadian-Italian community, economic opportunities were not forthcoming or feasible—there are too many differences between the countries and their economies.

Another question that arose from the discussion was, “How do we catch up with the United States?” Participants made a number of suggestions:

- Canada needs a highly skilled and educated workforce.
- Canada needs to use the human capital of immigrants and Canada-born visible minorities who have the potential to help Canada close the gap with the United States.
- Canada has the power as a country to open the door to skilled immigrants. In the long run, we will be more flexible, proficient, and productive.

Participants identified two barriers to give Canada's cultural diversity a more competitive edge: 1) employers do not understand the value immigrants bring to their operations; and 2) employers and professional associations seem unable to accurately or fairly assess foreign credentials.

### **Does diversity and multiculturalism contribute to Canada's competitiveness and productivity growth in the global market? If so, how? What are the barriers?**

First, what is productivity? In addition to skills, training, and credentials, the definition should indicate that diversity enhances business skills, innovation, and cohesiveness. Theoretically, a diverse society should lead to more ideas and a higher quality of human capital. For example, in heterogeneous workforce there may be conflicts, but through problem solving this workforce can improve management systems and productivity. Moreover, employees' ties to their country of origin offer potential trade connections to foreign markets.

Immigration can also expose organizations to more efficient business practices. For example, the Canadian operations of Honda and Toyota have developed manufacturing processes that are somewhat foreign to our own, but superior in terms of quality control, efficiency, and cost savings.

It is important to envision both the domestic and foreign labour markets as essential elements to increasing competitiveness and productivity. Yet, even though Canada has a good theoretical understanding of the potential of extending its global reach, there remain few pragmatic approaches to its implementation and practice.

To take full advantage of immigration and a multicultural society, Canada must recognize the assets that it has in Canadian diversity. The non-recognition of foreign credentials and foreign work experience lead to immigrant under-employment, and produces enormous economic losses. It is imperative that all Canadian employers realize the economic potential and value of hiring immigrants and visible minorities. Better integration and asset recognition are needed to employ people at their full potential and benefit the economy.

Finally, a significant barrier is the absence of immigrant settlement in rural settings and other regions, such as Atlantic Canada. These regions are facing a skills gap, and immigration could help to alleviate skills shortages. Policies and good practices are needed to motivate immigrants to move to areas outside of the large urban centres of Toronto, Montréal, and Vancouver. Rural areas and other regions need to place collective emphasis on quality of life advantages and economic benefits for people who want to live and work in those areas. They need to provide a "welcome mat" in order to help people from diverse ethnocultural backgrounds feel a sense of acceptance within the community. Ensuring welcoming communities will lead to permanent and long-term immigrant and visible minority economic integration.



### **Panel 3: Generational Challenges and Opportunities**

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**Chair: Peter Hicks, Assistant Deputy Minister, Social Development Canada**

#### **Panel Presentation**

Peter Hicks introduced four points that would be used to direct the session. The first point concerned which specific minority group should be discussed. Visible minorities and recent immigrants are not synonymous but do overlap; Hicks stated that approximately 70% of visible minorities are recent immigrants. He discussed the immigration policy of the early 1990s that resulted in an influx of highly educated immigrants at a time when the labour market could not accommodate them. There will be a greater demand for labour in 2017, as the baby boomers reach retirement. However, the attitude of the immigrants who experienced the labour shortage of the 1990s may translate into future generations. He stated that the focus of the discussion should be visible minorities including recent immigrants but not including recent immigrants of non-visible minorities.

Hicks then pointed out that different things are meant by the word “generation.” Generation can be used to discuss “generational mobility,” which refers to how socio-economic differences are translated across generations; however, the discussion paper examines generations in terms of inter-generational relationships within families, rather than mobility across generations. These inter-generational relationships come to the fore when the children of recent immigrants are native-born.

The third point that Hicks outlined sought to clarify “the notion of a ‘life course’ concept.” Hicks stated that “social well-being” concerns the mutual flow of resources between individuals in various areas of society over the course of someone’s life; hence, the life course concept “emphasizes the mutual flow of resources across many institutions of society.” This flow occurs between individuals and their families, communities, and governments. Serious problems can arise when the support from some of these areas are simultaneously absent. He added that, while the plenary outlined some clear cases in which homogeneous neighbourhoods are problematic, in this specific area of discussion, they are an advantage.

The fourth point raised by Hicks addressed the homogeneity of visible minority groups. Visible minorities can be addressed as a whole, separated into groups by country of origin, or even separated by current geographical area. Although it may not be politic, this issue and how it affects policy cannot be ignored, and he urged participants to “have that fairly honest discussion.”

**Barbara Mitchell** of Simon Fraser University presented a paper entitled “Canada’s Growing Visible Minority Population: Generational Challenges, Opportunities, and Federal Policy Considerations.”

Mitchell stated that the ethnic sub-groups of visible minorities are already known, but heterogeneity within these sub-groups must be identified. In defining the term “visible minority families,” she pointed out that the “family” has changed drastically from the ideologically based concept of the 1940s. Families no longer resemble the “*Leave It To Beaver* family type.” This is in part due to increased immigration and differing cultural definitions of family.

She defined “generation” as a particular stage in the life course at which unique challenges or opportunities may emerge. “Generational opportunity” was used to refer to resources that facilitate intergenerational transfers, linkages, and positive outcomes; “generational challenges” refers to the lack or absence of these resources.

In discussing current trends and projections, Mitchell highlighted that in 2017, the median age of immigrants will be younger than the current average, which has important implications for the labour market. She also pointed out that three-quarters of recent immigrants are members of a visible minority.

The main question that framed Mitchell’s paper was “How will this growing population experience unique generational challenges and opportunities?” A life course/ecological perspective was adopted because it suits an examination of change over the course of families’ lives; it allows the consideration of the context in which visible minority families live their lives. This framework also lends well to the notion that one family member affects another, which is called “linked lives.” Mitchell emphasized the changing needs and circumstances of the family over the life course.

Mitchell stated that there are four levels of the life course/ecological framework within the context of time; just as families’ needs change over time, so does society. Mitchell presented a conceptual diagram that demonstrated that the levels are nested within each other. The microsystem contains intergenerational relationship characteristics such as immigration history and proximity or distance. This is nested within the mesosystem, which contains generational demands, constraints, and opportunities over the life course. This, in turn, is nested in the exosystem, which contains external environmental conditions such as daycare and social networks; finally, these are nested in the macrosystem, which contains such broad influences as governmental policies and the state of the economy.

In presenting existing research on generational relations at the family level, Mitchell stated that a number of assumptions are frequently made that may not be true; for instance, while some Asian cultures have a higher notion of “filial piety,” that may not be true of immigrants of Asian background.

Some research outlined that certain sub-groups are prone to poverty, although for some it is a transient situation. Generational conflicts at the family level can be triggered by

health issues, which may be related to violence or disciplinary methods within certain cultural groups, can trigger generational conflicts. At the environmental level, some research identified that generational relations include a great deal of discrimination. Social networks are not always positive influences; for instance, some young adults may fall into destructive peer groups.

Mitchell stated that her area of research “showcases the importance of considering resource availability at pivotal life course points.” She outlined five key areas for federal policy considerations: immigration policies, settlement, housing, and residential concentration; childcare and education; employment and income, especially considering the changing age structure of the labour market; access to services, which must reflect the specific needs of some immigrants, and service provision; and the need for intersectoral collaboration and knowledge transfer.

Mitchell concluded by identifying two priority areas: the expansion of policies, programs, and services for visible minority families who lack economic and social capital resources, particularly at critical transitional points in the life course (such as pre- and post-migration, and entering school); and the development of “investment” strategies that slow down or reverse long-term cumulative disadvantage, with an emphasis on education, training, and health issues to encourage successful life course outcomes.

**Jean-Frantz Benjamin**, a school board trustee in Montréal, spoke about education. He stated that within the Black community, that there is a higher-than-average dropout rate and greater-than-average educational failure. There are many background issues facing this community, such as the systemic discrimination it faces. The revenue level of the family and the level of education achieved by the parents are also factors that, when combined, often result in the children failing at school. Resources to aid families facing these challenges are often difficult to obtain or are incorrectly provided.

There is an absence of the Black community in some sectors of employment, which is explained by a lack of recognition of vocational training within the culture. The challenges or values of diverse groups must be considered in promoting this type of training. In the future, educational issues should be examined to ensure that all groups have access to all trades and professions.

**Robert Glossop**, executive director of the Vanier Institute for the Family, elaborated on the notion of the life course perspective. He emphasized that this perspective is essential to the understanding of any family; it allows researchers to see the relationship between the relations within the family and the external context. Glossop stated that heterogeneity is essential to discussions of 2017, as foreign- and Canadian-born, first, second, and third generation visible minorities are all different. The discrimination originating “from those of us whose differences are invisible” must also be addressed. He stated that the difficulty is to find the unifying concepts that can serve as a foundation for new policy and goals. Assumptions must also be challenged; for instance, new Canadians may not be bound to

the traditions of their source countries, as their immigration may express a willingness to change and adapt. Glossop also asked if it is even known “what a successful life course outcome looks like.”

## Facilitated Discussion

### **Are the challenges facing the key populations a short-term problem? Why or Why not? What assumptions are we making?**

- in terms of the changing parent-child relationships over the life course (this includes the adult-child with an elderly parent).
- in terms of visible minorities born outside Canada.
- in terms of visible minorities born within Canada.
- in terms of the aging population.

In response to a question asking about the definition of key populations, Peter Hicks explained that the definition or definitions was up to the group. Although visible minorities are usually divided into two groups—those born in Canada and those who have immigrated here—that level of differentiation may not be sufficient for this discussion. It may be more appropriate to examine the needs of visible minorities as a whole, by the two main categories, by specific sub-groups or by location, depending on the policy being discussed.

Danny Lyonnais, facilitator, and Hicks said that the purpose of the question was to identify the assumptions that organizations bring to their work with visible minorities. The results of this discussion were important as they would inform the discussions of the more substantive questions that followed.

Hicks described several such assumptions. With respect to the parent-child relationship, he noted that visible minority parents may have a different culture than their children although they all live in Canada. With respect to the aging population, he noted that it is likely that there will be an increased need for skills in 2017 and thus there will be an ample supply of good jobs for both seniors and immigrants. Assumptions are important because they have implications for the types of policies that are developed.

A participant noted that the questions only examined visible minority sub-populations and did not examine how Canada or its institutions have responded to the visible minorities. Hicks stated that he was pleased that this perspective was raised and encouraged this perspective to be pursued. The questions were intended only to be a starting point for discussion and were developed to assist the groups to identify important issues and policies. He encouraged the discussion groups to report their discussions and findings to the plenary sessions to ensure that the information would be dispersed.

In response to a question about the definition of short-term, Hicks explained that this time frame referred to issues that would still be on the agenda in 2017.

Participants then discussed the first question in small groups and a representative from each group summarized the discussion to the plenary session.

The group concerned with visible minorities born outside Canada reported that they experience incongruencies between institutional responses and the needs of communities, that the social values of the majority impact policy development, that there is a lack of visible minority participation in decisionmaking and institutional representation, and that there is a need for cultural sensitivity with respect for human values. They concluded their presentation by noting that the integration of visible minorities into Canadian society requires that the larger Canadian society embrace diversity.

The group concerned with visible minorities born within Canada concluded that they still face challenges such as discrimination, poverty, and access to equal opportunities. Group members noted that lessons could be learned from the progress made on women's and francophone equity, challenges that are also long term. The group identified a number of assumptions including that the government is a key player, the problem will only be resolved by the collaboration of the minority working together with the majority, and that the problems are complex and thus require complex solutions.

The third group explored the issue of an aging population. Participants noted that the elderly ethnic population is heterogeneous—some were born in Canada, some came as young immigrants, and others entered Canada later in life sponsored by their families. Health care was identified as a major challenge for this group. Problems of cross cultural communication between clients and health care providers, the financial implications of accessing alternative health care, which can be popular among visible minority seniors, and the popular assumption that elder care is provided by visible minority families were identified as issues impacting on this group. In addition, visible minorities face the same problems as many non-visible Canadians such as simultaneously providing elder and child care to family members. The group noted that immigrants come to Canada for different reasons: as immigrants, as refugees or for family reunification. These different motivations affect policy.

The last group explored the parent-child relationship over the life course. Participants noted that visible minorities are congregated in two or three urban areas and it is assumed that they are in close proximity to extended family. Conversely, it is assumed that the families of visible minorities located in rural areas or smaller centres are dispersed. The group also noted that family members of immigrants may be widely dispersed internationally, either back in the home country or as emigrants to other countries. The group explored how the impacts of an aging population may enable women who had been focusing on child care to enter the work force, how fertility rates will affect the number of family members available to undertake elder care, and that delayed marriage and childbearing will have many implications. Situations such as children leaving home later and "boomerang kids," although not unique to this group, will also have implications. Lastly, the group noted that language barriers are an employment barrier as well as a barrier to supporting children in the education system.

Think about the policies that will make a difference to Canada between now and 2017, and identify more specifically the challenges facing these key populations at an individual/family level, a community/regional level, and a government/societal level, all from the point of view of visible minorities born inside Canada and born outside.

What policy issues emerge from these challenges that are common to visible minorities born in Canada and outside Canada, and distinct for each of these two groups?

Based on what you have learned this afternoon, what are the opportunities for horizontal co-operation between and among federal institutions, other levels of government, and the private and voluntary sectors?

A representative from each discussion group of participants presented their answers to the session in plenary; each group added to the previous groups' statements to form a collaborative response.

At the individual family level, recent immigrants need to become proficient in English or French; this may be an issue for young children born in Canada soon after their parents' arrival. Recent immigrants also must learn the culture, social values, and societal roles predominant in Canadian society (such as the roles of women and the expectations placed on caregivers) and that may be quite different from the immigrants' country of origin. As recent immigrants become accustomed to Canadian society, family structures and roles must evolve or adapt. Immigrants must also become familiar with the school system. The children of immigrant families will experience Canadian culture in a much different manner than their parents; this could lead to inter-generational difficulties. Programs must be developed so that youth, in particular, are given "a sense of belonging." The opposite challenge exists, as well—there may be a lack of opportunity for immigrants to maintain their original language and culture. Although parents may recognize the social and economic advantages of maintaining a second language, children of immigrants may experience peer pressure to abandon their original language. While ethnic enclaves help to maintain the language of origin and provide support to low income immigrant families, they also offer low employment opportunities, low role models of achievement, and can prevent young people from achieving average income levels. One group suggested that a policy that ensured that immigrant youth completed post-secondary education could lift those youth out of poverty.

As the third group's representative stated, because "integration is a two-way street," Canadian society must adapt to increasing multiculturalism. Labour market access is a challenge that faces all immigrants. Canadian society must recognize that immigrants' qualifications will not look the same as the equivalent Canadian qualifications. As a solution, these qualifications could be recognized formally before the immigrants arrive in Canada. There is currently a lack of public support for cross-cultural understanding. Anti-racism initiatives are necessary and a shared responsibility between the federal, provincial, and municipal governments, communities, and workplaces; there should be a diversity component in government programs. The Minister responsible for multiculturalism, as one participant stated, "needs more teeth," and should behave in a

manner similar to that of the Commissioner for Official Languages. The Minister should ensure that diversity is as omnipresent as gender equality and bilingualism. Human rights legislations should also be strengthened.

At the organizational level, there is currently a lack of cultural competency and specialized services. Immigrants who have difficulty with language may result in difficulty communicating with services such as health care; in particular, this will affect elderly immigrants who do not speak English or French. As a result, there must be culture-specific health care and education. In addition, these services must not be based on charity but on quality. ESL education must be more universally accessible, along with support within the classroom.

Before social services can affect a community, the underlying problems confronting the area must be solved. The first group cited the example of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, where social services proliferate but do not appear to make an impact on the overwhelming poverty of the area. Support for community service groups should come from both families and governments. A programme in B.C. called "Success," which is geared towards the Chinese community and is funded by the community, was identified as a successful example.

Immigrants living in rural areas may experience less support than those living in urban areas. Policies should be developed to help bridge the rural/urban divide.

Recent immigrants may be unfamiliar with the roles played by the government, NGOs, and social services in Canadian society. These immigrants may therefore be unwilling to turn to these organizations for help.

There must be more co-operation between organizations that provide services to visible minorities, and more co-operation between levels of government. For instance, the federal government is clearly involved in multiculturalism and diversity issues, but provincial government is responsible for many of the services delivered to visible minority groups. The provincial government therefore needs to play a stronger role in these issues. One group suggested that during policy development, the health agreement could be used as a model to give the provinces the responsibility of providing services to visible minorities under a national umbrella. Poverty is another issue addressed by all levels of government.

Immigrants must be educated on the Canadian values of equality and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; ensuring that this education reaches all ethnic groups is a federal and provincial responsibility, as citizenship education is part of the educational system. Another barrier to meeting complex objectives is the extreme compartmentalization of the federal government. The Service Canada Initiative and portals may help various levels of government make information, programmability, and items such as registration forms more accessible to people from visible minority groups. Staff should receive mandatory training to encourage public support for inter-cultural understanding; sensitivity to diversity should be part of basic competency within governments.

Current research is adept at identifying statistics, but does not examine the reasons behind those numbers, nor does it suggest solutions. There needs to be more action-oriented research.

## **Conclusions**

Hicks summarized the comments, adding that “the flavour of the discussion leading up to the conclusion is at least as valuable as the conclusion itself.” He pointed out that the groups did not make much distinction between visible minorities born here and those born abroad, which implies that the participants do not see different sets of issues confronting those two groups. Hicks also pointed out that the issues and solutions identified were very similar to those already in place. He stressed the importance of the resulting conclusion, which is that there is a continuity of challenges facing visible minorities, and that the situation in 2017 will be much the same as it is now.

Hicks also acknowledged that there was a great amount of stress placed on the importance of language. This goal is two-fold; there is a need for immigrants to learn one of Canada's official languages, but they must also maintain their mother tongue. He saw greater emphasis placed on the first goal. Hicks also identified culturally specific services as an area of high importance, along with diversity training and sensitivity within governments. He stated that he also understood the emphasis placed on the challenges of reconciling the cultures of the immigrants' country of origin with Canadian culture.

Hicks pointed out that the groups did not make many recommendations geared specifically for children, although one group stressed that children must be identified separately from their parents, as they frequently “fall through the cracks.” He concluded that it is difficult to draw a “comprehensive set of solutions around children without setting them in a family and community contest.” He also noted that although each group identified a lot of cross-governmental fragmentation and a need for inter-governmental co-operation, there were very few suggestions as to how that should be reconciled.

Hicks added that there must be a “holistic linking between governments and individuals,” which will require greater cultural and linguistic sensitivity.



## Panel 4: Health and Social Services

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**Chair: Caroline Weber, Director General, Policy, Priorities and Planning  
Directorate, Health Canada**

### Panel Presentation

Caroline Weber opened the discussion on Health and Social Services. In the three presentations that followed the speakers highlighted the need to consider the main determinants of health including economic situations, employment options, language, and cultural barriers.

**Dr. Jacqueline Oxman-Martinez** of McGill University provided an overview of the challenges in the delivery of health and social services to a multicultural population. Her research focus involves the intersections of gender, ethnicity, and culture and the impact these can have on health. In 2001, newcomers accounted for more than two thirds of Canada's population growth. By 2017, one in every four or five Canadians will have been born outside this country. Her list of health determinants included culture, education, literacy, physical and social environments, support networks, and gender with inequalities "between minority populations and the dominant culture" being present for each of these determinants.

Some of the main points of Oxman-Martinez's presentation were:

- Health practices and definitions of good or bad health may be socially and culturally constructed.
- Health care services must consider health practices in diverse societies.
- Language is "one of the most significant barriers to health services," which could lead from misdiagnosis to discouraging any use of the health care system.
- Cultural barriers for immigrants can stem from unfamiliarity with the Canadian health care system. Financial barriers can include services only partially insured or not at all such as dental and eye care.
- Cultural competency refers to understanding and adapting the health care system to the patient's socially and culturally informed health beliefs and behaviours.

In speaking of adapting the current systems to the changing needs of the population, Oxman-Martinez highlighted the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, and the *Canada Health Act* as the three key policy regimes that relate to health and diversity and recommended the direct participation of "migrants and ethno-racial minorities." When trying to expand access in practice, inequalities within society outside the health care system and other barriers within the system must be addressed. Oxman-Martinez' policy recommendations include developing federal policies to require cultural sensitivity in health care in all provinces. Disparities arise

from patterns of exclusion and require alliances across policy sectors to form an integrated policy approach.

**Susan Makin**, a Director for the Healthy Families program at the City of Toronto, focused on the service delivery perspective and how decisions affect families and individuals. She provided the perspective of a city in which over 39% of the population speak a language other than English or French, 15% of the population are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (GLBTQ), and the residents come from over 200 different countries. The challenges in providing services to this diverse population relate to religion, language, culture, ethnicity, gender, ageism, sexism, and a range of “other isms.” The notion of what constitutes a family has become more complex—families may have one or two parents, same-sex parents, or nannies raising the children. She commented that there would not likely be a need for such meetings as this Forum if health and diversity did not link so directly with health and inequities. Recent immigration increases the likelihood of being poor and she reiterated that economic situation is linked to health issues.

Makin emphasized the need to work in partnership to create organizational change and implement programs that are sensitive to cultural perspectives related to health. In Toronto schools, 31% of the children were born outside Canada and 84% of the nutrition programs provided for children from six months to six years of age are delivered in languages other than English or French. Family health issues may include dealing with children who were victims of war situations.

One way Makin's department addresses these issues is by using lay home workers to counter the fact that the professional home workers do not reflect the diversity and realities of the population they serve. The Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program functions as a settlement program that provides services to pregnant and post-natal women who are new to Canada. Language challenges are huge barriers with spending reaching \$750,000 a year in Toronto on interpreters.

**Suzanne Jackson** from the University of Toronto referred to the earlier presentation by the Chief Statistician of Canada that showed graphically that predictions do not usually bear out in reality. She advised participants to be ready for the unexpected and to do things in a more transformative way. More rules and regulations are a common response to the complex changes taking place in society. Instead, Jackson encouraged attendees to embrace differences to promote innovation, to “encourage messiness in a sense” and find different ways of dealing with things that don't turn out as expected. She advocated thinking in terms of collaboration across all jurisdictions instead of competition, listening to each other for new ideas to deal with situations differently. Jackson further argued for the need to get away from thinking in terms of separate areas to be addressed, and listed five major action areas in health promotion:

- **Healthy public policies**

A major policy movement is needed on an international scale to address issues that include healthy workplaces, schools, islands, communities, etc. Jackson advocated pulling people together to discuss what is needed in these areas to make them healthy. She also pointed to a need for a way to encourage people to engage in policy change across sectors. The global connection will be much stronger in 2017 than it is today and so thinking needs to be not only cross sectoral but global.

- **Creating healthy environments**

This would include celebrating the strengths and assets that people bring with them and offer to their new community.

- **Strengthening community action**

Jackson recommended small grants to provide support to people with good ideas within communities. People interested and willing to put energy into community work often come from other countries and these grants would support that work. She also pointed to the need to enable people to connect across cultures. One building in Toronto, for example, houses people who speak 120 different languages and Jackson called for support for the connections needed to build a sense of community.

- **Developing personal skills**

Jackson argued that it is imperative to develop capacity and skills for parenting through the school systems and community resources.

- **Reorienting health services**

Jackson recommended a more collaborative working relationships in this area. She supported the recommendations for cultural competence presented by Oxman-Martinez.

Jackson defined health promotion as a process enabling people to participate in decisions regarding, affecting, creating, and determining their own health. Health promotion should enable people to control their own health and well-being.

## **Facilitated Discussion**

One participant asked if the income differential for immigrants explained their entire problem in accessing health care, commenting that low-income Canadians also face access problems. In reply, Oxman-Martinez stated that “a number of intersecting barriers,” such as language, culture, and finances create problems for immigrants. Therefore, income is but one barrier.

Another participant said that many immigrants are healthier when they arrive in this country and that it would take approximately 10 years for an immigrant's health to fall to the level of a lower-income Canadian. Several participants contended that it would depend on the immigrants' station in the originating country, as well as their status upon

entering Canada. In addition, immigrants undergo a more rigorous screening process than do refugees from war-torn or severely disadvantaged countries who are seeking asylum on humanitarian grounds. Naturally, people who enter the country illegally are not subject to any screening process.

Makin stated that health is not merely an absence of illness but encompasses factors such as school-readiness, non-violence, and respect for others. A participant referred to the different needs of immigrants based upon their different pre-migration circumstances, such as violence, abuse, food, and accommodations. Specific reference was made to refugees living for several months in a holding camp where a family of four may be confined to a very small room. Such experiences affect all aspects of the broader definition of health.

The facilitator introduced the six questions that had been previously identified for discussion:

**What are the key social and economic determinants of health outcome disparities between ethnocultural groups and the general population?**

**To what degree are services and communications culturally and linguistically appropriate, accessible, and accessed? What are the most effective ways to address barriers to access for marginalized populations?**

**What are the advantages and/or disadvantages (protective factors and potential risks) of multicultural languages and customs on the promotion of health in Canadian communities?**

**What is the nature and effect of discrimination and social exclusion in health and social services and what role can government(s) play to address these problems?**

**With respect to population mobility and migration, what are the impacts on the health outcomes of specific populations and their access to health care services?**

**How does culture mediate perception of risk? What is the relationship between culture and health protection (e.g. infectious disease management, product recalls, and warnings)?**

Following discussion, the group decided to collapse the six questions into three and to begin with “the nature and effect of discrimination and social exclusion in health and social services” exclusive of the role of government.

Jackson cited the example of South Asian women, who have a high incidence of heart problems but were not given rehabilitative treatment. Evidence showed that the women were not referred because the physicians either did not recognize their increased risk or because of language and cultural barriers. Physicians believed that the women would be unable to access the rehabilitative treatment that was available only in English and,

culturally, they would be unable to participate in treatment given to a mixed group of men and women. This example speaks of an increased need to find ways to change the system to accommodate a need. Another individual identified this as a structural impediment.

Furthermore, participants cited the importance of communication and the need to recognize cultural differences. There is a danger in failing to recognize a practice that does not conform to the dominant cultural perception.

In addition, Makin commented that the health system is so complex that it is impossible to navigate without a solid understanding of the language. She identified the need for a single access point to eliminate repeated assessments and referrals. Such a process is also costly because it requires additional time off work, a difficult proposition for individuals with less flexible employment, which immigrants and visible minorities are often forced to take.

In response to an observation that the latter is a problem for many, not just immigrant families, and that everyone needs a health advocate, Makin stated that the language barrier makes the situation more acute for immigrant families. For example, when her child is hospitalized, she could easily be the advocate for her child. However, when an immigrant child is hospitalized, the parents are unable to advocate because of language issues. Often, the ill child, who possess a better fluency in English or French, has to be the translator for the parents. Oxman-Martinez agreed that it is easier for Canadians because they can communicate in the same language and have the same value systems. There is, therefore, a difference in approaching services that must be recognized from the outset.

A discussion ensued concerning access to medical treatment by refugees suffering from HIV AIDS. Some refugees do not realize their right to treatment and others are afraid to access treatment because they fear it would have a negative impact on their immigration status. There is a need for the government to provide immigrants with information about their rights.

As one participant observed, there is a need for intersectoral collaboration and for community involvement in the development and implementation of policies. Several participants spoke about the pros and cons of using volunteers to assist the immigrant community overcome barriers to access health care. These individuals provide needed services and act as agents of internal change. Another referred to the fact that they “carry the credibility of the community on their shoulders” and are sometimes involved in situations that place too great a burden on them.

As the discussion continued about job training, participants discussed foreign credential recognition and the need to strike a balance between experience and educational requirements. Solutions to the various educational and employment issues include cultural literacy and knowledge (cultural sensitivity), which can still coexist with racism. The use of peer counsellors from within some communities presented a unique problem.

One participant mentioned that individuals often do not feel comfortable discussing their private issues with someone from their own community, particularly if it is a small community where everyone knows each other .

The importance of providing cultural education to front-line workers was emphasized. Women with difficulty communicating in English often are treated for ailments they may not have or are prescribed anti-depressants unnecessarily. Some women have tried to escape abuse in their home only to face stereotypes from shelters and staff that wrongly assumed their culture or faith dictated such behaviour. Collaboration was one suggested response, a way to provide service workers with contacts they can call for information to clarify a cultural situation. An elderly woman in a nursing home was mistakenly deemed obsessive-compulsive when staff did not recognize that her constant requests for washing were a necessary part of her faith practice.

These situations have led one cultural organization to provide information training to service staff so they have increased knowledge and awareness of that faith and culture. The participant from that cultural organization encouraged other groups to take this proactive educational approach as well.

One participant spoke of similar isolation and barriers faced by residents in remote Aboriginal communities. Health care workers are flown in occasionally; a “great chasm” inhibits access to some education and employment resources, preventing members of these communities from joining the health profession. They may not see it as a viable option, or they may not have the resources to pursue it. “You don’t have to be an immigrant to experience that whole cultural barrier,” noted one participant. Women who are culturally opposed to separation or divorce face enormous difficulty when advised to completely break with their families.

More than one participant emphasized the importance of having a strong voice as a community. In addressing the needs of marginalized groups “we need to find out what they need and give them a voice.”

Also discussed was the importance of a horizontal approach instead of the traditional top-down system with decisions made only by policymakers. Those who make policy decisions must incorporate the opinions and input of the minority groups and people who work directly with them. There is also a need within the community at large to understand how the policy system works. The Inclusive Institutions Initiative was cited as an example of cooperation between the federal government and community-based organizations. Participants commented that these changes will not be easy and will involve more listening from both the policy and community perspectives. Discussion followed about funding changes: funding that was once provided for the ongoing existence of organizations is now tied to specific projects. The organizational perspective is of uncertainty, but participants said that government must evaluate the effectiveness of the funding it provides on a regular basis. Again, the issue of a strong voice—this time for the organizations themselves—was championed in the discussion. Smaller community

groups are at a disadvantage when they bid against larger, more professional organizations with larger budgets and full time proposal writers.

There was some discussion about the difficulties in getting up to twenty government departments to “look through the same lens” at health care issues. One participant called it a complex problem to address, and advised a long-term strategy to examine the responsibilities of health, immigration, provincial and municipal governments, and other aspects. This is a confusing area for everyone, immigrants included, so the participants turned to the idea of a single point of entry into the system. A program within the federal government—Service Canada—is in planning to effectively provide this single point of entry. It was also recognized that training is needed for teachers and other front-line workers to learn to identify indications of trauma in new Canadians. These signs may not appear for some years after their arrival in Canada by which time their initial year of programs and support has ended.

There was also discussion of the benefits of alternative therapies. One participant noted there is a lot to be learned from alternative medicine. A holistic view incorporating cultural, spiritual, and social approaches should be explored. Another participant pointed out that being rebuffed by the Canadian health care system could cause new Canadians to become more reliant on their own communities and health treatments. He also noted that western medicine is based on tested approaches taken from traditional medicine.

Some participants argued that there is a difference between “barriers” (such as barriers of language) and “discrimination.” It was also recognized that any policy to deal with the rising multicultural population needs to be cross-sectoral and cross-jurisdictional. Participants discussed the impact of culture on immigrants. One spoke of her experience as a landed immigrant from the U.S. and her challenges in buying health insurance when her access to health care was taken away years after she arrived in Canada. Her difficulties were lessened because she spoke the same language and was familiar with the culture in Canada.

Communication among stakeholders, including new immigrant groups, is a key to success in developing future policies. Key points included the need to improve communication and cultural literacy, evaluate programs, provide mechanisms to ensure a strong voice, establish health promotion campaigns, fund pilot projects, and bring all stakeholders together for open discussion. Unfortunately, the inequalities between the minority populations and non-minority population exist in every determinant of health. To the question of cost, Oxman-Martinez advised thinking in terms of making an investment now and “ask yourself how much it’s going to save in the future.”

## **Panel 5: Public Institutions and Institutional Change**

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**Chair: Raymond Crête, Director General, Public Service Commission**

### **Panel Presentation**

Raymond Crête opened the panel by remarking that the question of diversity and equity is not new in the public service. In fact, it goes back to the 1960s when recruitment of francophones, and then women and Aboriginals, became an imperative. This is an ongoing issue, he said, but the government needs to establish benchmarks for measuring progress. Crête proposed that the group should look at possible concrete solutions in order to move the on diversity and equity agenda forward. Pre-qualified inventories have not been successful because people do not use them. But active recruitment of visible minorities can work. Summing up his own experience of organizing a successful recruitment day for ethnic minorities, Crête said, “When you bring real jobs to the table, good candidates show up.” Furthermore, he added, employment equity has worked for other groups, so it should work for visible minorities as well.

Public policy analyst **Andrew Cardozo** presented a summary of his research paper entitled *Public Institutions and Institutional Change: Diversifying the Government of Canada*.

First, Cardozo described Canada's changing face with respect to visible minorities, which he described as primarily an urban issue: Toronto and Vancouver will see their visible minority populations grow to over 50%; some jurisdictions such as Richmond, B.C., and Markham, Ontario already have a majority population of visible minorities. The problem, he noted, is that these majority groups have little power, as they are not represented in municipal governments.

Cardozo identified some of the issues of diversity that Canadians have already faced: sharia law, turbans in the RCMP, the Air India bombing, Christmas celebrations, racial profiling, post-9/11 security, and foreign credentials. Positive opportunities presented by ethnic communities include the presence of world languages and cultures, an enriched athletic and cultural talent, and a ready-made workforce. He reiterated Crête's remark that change in the area of racial diversity is similar to earlier waves of change in employment equity, adding that Canada can learn from past experiences.

Cardozo then proposed reasons for change in the federal public service, suggesting that it needs to reflect the diversity of the public and to use the talents available in a new global economy. Slow change has already engendered frustration among minority groups. Various government departments recognize the need to set new goals for the recruitment of visible minorities: Labour Canada has identified possible benefits to the economy, the Prime Minister has spoken of promoting multiculturalism, and the President of the



Treasury Board and the Clerk of the Privy Council have both observed the need to accelerate recruitment of ethnic minorities.

In addressing the question of how to change, Cardozo recommended a human resources component and a policy component. The first would include more effective employment equity, diversity training for all employees (especially managers), a more open attitude toward different approaches, training and mentoring for visible minority employees, and accountability and measurement. The policy component would include an annual report on multiculturalism, such as that which is already presented to Parliament by the Minister Chan.

Citing examples of agencies that have implemented effective diversity policies, Cardozo identified the CRTC as a good case study. The CRTC approached the issue by first making changes in policy and service. It defined the need for change, the problem, the objective, and the solution. It engaged senior management as well as concerned public, and helped employees to understand the “cultural paradigm shift.” It identified what could be done within the current mandate and what would require a new mandate. The agency also considered how fast it could institute these changes. Methods for measuring and reporting were established, and a strategy was created to deal with anticipated resistance. The CRTC also made internal and administrative changes: it explained the initiative to all concerned and integrated diversity into all aspects of the agency’s work.

In concluding, Cardozo addressed the question of the future by affirming that employment equity in the federal public service is a crucial factor in dealing with changing demographics in Canada. The public service needs to reflect the population in order to govern effectively. He identified the key federal departments as those associated with human resources, the economy, cultural policy, justice, security, and international policy.

**Prem Benimadhu** of the Conference Board of Canada spoke of the research his organization has done recently. Despite the passage of the Employment Equity Act 20 years ago, the Conference Board found that systemic discrimination still exists. Working on the premise that minorities represent a primary source in the knowledge economy, the agency studied 12 cases of organizations that have successfully implemented diversity policies. Benimadhu stated that in order to succeed, a program must include not just a vision of change, but also execution of new policies. “Vision without execution is hallucination,” he affirmed. Benimadhu identified five converging factors that applied to all 12 organizations. First, the role of the leaders in the implementation process is critical. Second, the organizational context must be examined to see if visible minorities feel welcome. Many organizations, he said, are recruiting visible minorities, but not retaining them. “The pipeline is not only long, but it is leaking,” he lamented. Line managers must be trained to understand differences, Benimadhu added, and to recognize their own biases. Further, more ethnic minority managers should be appointed in order to send a positive message to the labour force and to “create a brand.” Finally, accountability is vital; encouraging diversity should be part of the performance management system.

Benimadhu concluded by stating that the time had come in Canada to move beyond the stage of awareness to implementation. For a society to be cohesive, he remarked, it must be inclusive.

**Uzma Shakir** of the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians made an impassioned presentation on the urgency of solving the problems of immigrant underemployment. She stated that this represents an issue of basic human rights, as highly educated visible minority immigrants have the right to be employed in their fields of expertise. Shakir suggested there is a constant discourse in public institutions about how Canada should change immigrants, and at the same time be “nice” to them. “But niceness is passé,” she declared, and Canadians should be the ones to redesign the thinking. A fundamental ideological change is needed.

In addressing the problem of underemployment and “downward mobility” of immigrants, Shakir remarked, “This is a travesty. This is happening over and over again.” Referring to statistics presented earlier in the day, which showed that the children of immigrants tend to fare well economically, Shakir indicated that this promise of success for future generations is not good enough for today’s immigrants.

Shakir questioned the rigidity of the bilingual imperative in the federal public service. Most of the immigrants she knows are in fact bilingual, but their other language is Mandarin or Punjabi. Instead of requiring French and English, she asked how the public service could take advantage of the many languages immigrants do speak. Shakir referred specifically to the problems of foreign-educated doctors who cannot practice in this country, suggesting that Canada is perhaps violating their fundamental human rights to live with dignity and to work. “What is it about Canada that makes other countries’ standards inadequate?” she asked. She added that rather than proceed step-by-step, Canada should move quickly to provide accreditation to such professionals.

In conclusion, Shakir addressed the notion of participation. Immigrants should be allowed to help shape this society, she said. They are, in fact, already participating in their own way, by building mosques, by gathering together to discuss issues. This is participation and innovation, she affirmed, but it lacks the power behind it.

### **Facilitated Discussion**

Dominique Dennery introduced herself and explained that the discussion would continue till 3:00 p.m. There would then be a discussion, a break, followed by a report from each group and a discussion on horizontality.

The roundtable discussions following the panel presentation were set up to address five questions, each of which was posted next to a table. Participants were asked to select the question they were most interested in discussing.

Before beginning the discussions, a participant pointed out that first two questions were linked. Facilitator Wally Boxhill noted that the first question dealt with external recruitment, while the second dealt with internal issues.

The goal was, Boxhill explained, to distinguish these issues, itemize “concrete deliverables,” and identify practical mechanisms that could be put in use.

Regarding the second question, a participant asked if retaining visible minorities on staff was really a challenge. Boxhill responded that, even if this were not an issue, there might be mechanisms that could be put in place that “would make a difference.”

Boxhill added that he was concerned that there was a question of accountability: After the conference, “What will the follow up be? We don't want to meet again next year without having seen some collaborative work done.”

**Given the changing demographics, how can organizations meet their recruitment and hiring challenges to ensure a qualified, diverse, and representative workforce?**

**How can organizations support the retention, development, and promotion of visible minorities in the public service?**

**How can credential recognition be improved to address our skilled shortages?**

One group discussed three questions (above). During the report-back, group members noted that in order to overcome the problem of “preaching to the converted,” institutions should make use of “recruitment carrots” in the form of mentoring and coaching. A legislative framework should support goals. The definition of competencies should relate to both jobs and communities.

There is a need for leadership and accountability when dealing with hiring targets. Barrier-free testing tools and pre-qualified pools “would increase managers' ability to recruit and assure that people are given the motivation to hire.”

Regarding the situation from outside the public service, language requirements (the combination of English and French) were identified as a barrier for members of many communities. Information about the public service should be disseminated to the public in a greater range of formats. Finally, provincial bodies and governments must be pressured to address foreign credential recognition through legislation.

A participant questioned this group's identification of language as a barrier. Should the constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms be put into question? The group responded that language is still a barrier for many who apply for positions.

A discussion ensued about whether all public service positions are accurately posted as bilingual. A participant commented that she had over the years tried to recruit through

pre-qualified pools, but had found that, as the system allows applicants to assess their own expertise, many applicants wound up being under-qualified.

Boxhill explained this recruitment mechanism, putting it in perspective. The current system is a means of maintaining accountability to the public. The problems associated with self-reporting are, he acknowledged, well known beyond the public service.

But how, Uzma Shakir asked, can the institutions be changed? As far as individuals go, “you don’t even know what you’re dealing with.” Are the right questions being asked?

Boxhill answered that he had been describing the methods used “to recruit, advertise, and set qualifications for public servants and Canadian citizens.”

“My point,” Shakir said, “is that the criteria has to be flexible.” The job criteria should reflect the people coming in.

A participant responded by noting that job requirements still come down to basic practical requirements.

Shakir brought up the question of change: “How do you define it? We seem to think that change is only technical.”

Another participant identified conceptual change on an organizational level as key. She had, she said, “a hard time understanding why this is so difficult, when it was so easy when it was a question of gender.” In response, a group member said that while consulting with stakeholder groups about qualifications and recruitment, she found a concern that “people belonging to visible minorities were less likely than members of other groups to inflate their qualifications.”

A participant commented about bilingual postings, saying that as the number of francophones across Canada dwindles, the number of French speaking immigrants who would need services in French might increase.

### **How can we involve ethnocultural and ethno-racial communities in public decisionmaking processes and governance of public institutions including the development of inclusive policies, programs, and practices?**

The reporter for the group discussing this question began by explaining the group had divided its discussion into two parts: practical examples or cases, and challenges.

Starting with challenges, the group identified a lack of “common vision” where diversity is concerned. There is, as well, a need to maintain existing “tools or terms” such as employment equity. Officers “must be proactive about taking steps to include communities.” On an individual level, there is the issue of insularity. “How do you put yourself in someone else’s shoes?” asked one participant.

On a formal level, the group identified a disconnect between the *Multicultural Act* and the *Employment Equity Act*. These should work together as Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act* works with the *Employment Equity Act*. The *Multicultural Act* needs similar teeth as language law. If Section 41 brought about the hiring of more francophone officers, why can't the *Multicultural Act* have a similar effect?

The final challenge listed was ensuring that change be seen as an "organization wide issue" involving senior management.

The CRTC and an external advisory group (that acted as a formal advisor to the community and a sounding board) headed the group's list of cases. Sections 41 and 42 of the *Official Languages Act* were cited as an example of practical, implemented mechanisms. The group also referred to services provided at the provincial level by the government of Ontario, which "play a role in communities" in terms of "policies and practices." Western Economic Diversification Canada was cited as an example of a community-based network. Another was the Immigration and Refugee Board, whose "involvement with stakeholders" was lauded, but whose inner workings in management left something to be desired.

Mention was made of a diversity lens in development for use in policymaking. Accountability frameworks are important. If information is needed to track progress, it should be possible to collect statistics from data produced for the Treasury Board by the census (just as information is provided for the tracking of the fulfillment of obligations under the *Official Languages Act*).

Finally, in the public service, there was, it was felt, ample discussion of "how" goals might be attained, and "not enough time talking about what," particularly in terms of responsibilities the public service has. "We can't overstate the importance of sharing best practices," noted a participant. It might be useful to emphasize responsibility over accountability

Following this group's presentation, there were some questions about the diversity lens and the involvement (or lack thereof) of representatives from diverse communities, or visible minorities in its development. In response, it was noted that various groups would be involved at the testing stage. One suggestion was for the lens to include a race factor.

### **How do we equip people to work and manage an ever-changing diverse workforce and provide government for an ever-changing public?**

During the report-back period, the group discussing this final question acknowledged that managers need practical tools and know-how. Drawing a comparison with language training, the group wondered why sensitivity training is not available to managers in modules, much as second language training in English and French is available now. They suggested instating "intercultural workshops and social events where people interact freely about what is of cultural importance to them." Managers should be made aware of

internal policy and procedures. At present, they said, “These are not being marketed to management.”

Managers who deal with diversity in the workforce poorly “need a type of lifeline for information on different issues and rights. In a moment of crisis, procedure may not be enough.” A 1-800 line, or an ombudsman could be of help. As well, given that “adaptation occurs on two sides,” mentoring programs for new employees might “help them to understand the work environment.”

Finally, it was noted that customs inspectors need accurate information. Certain indicators should be recognized so that certain qualities are not mistaken for signs of criminality.

Boxhill summarized this, saying that hiring from a diverse workforce takes certain competencies. Concluding, he added, “From recruitment, to staffing, training, performance evaluation, a manager must be accountable.”

### **Horizontal Coordination**

After a break, a participant spoke of his own experience with the government's Career Assignment Program (CAP), which has a clear employment equity mandate. He stated that, as a Vietnamese immigrant, he benefited greatly from this program, and appreciated the fact that the public service took advantage of his qualifications and directed him to an appropriate career path. This is an effective way for the government to benefit from the diversity of its employees.

Crête invited participants to discuss in groups the question of how government departments can work horizontally to create new initiatives in the area of employment equity.

The first group reported that the concept of sharing best practices could work well, a sentiment that was reiterated by the remaining groups. The group also suggested that federal councils provide a model for horizontal co-operation. Participants cited the excellent use of the Innovation Fund for visible minority employment in the public service, which the federal councils can access. The Positive Measures Project, within the office of Disability Issues, was also identified as a good model of horizontal co-operation. The group discussed the possible use of memoranda of understanding to facilitate agreement between departments.

On the subject of career advancement for visible minorities, participants proposed that the public service should encourage mobility among departments so that employees from diverse backgrounds can gain management skills. One speaker observed that the Privy Council is developing such a program. The group suggested improving programs such as CAP and the Management Trainee Program (MTP), which already have specific employment equity mandates. They also suggested the government continue to draw

upon ideas put forth by the National Council for Visible Minorities in the Federal Public Service.

The group concluded that communication is key; it is important to spread the word about the successful programs already in place.

The second group addressed more directly the question of external recruitment of visible minorities. Members suggested that fewer job classifications would enhance flexibility; recruitment should be based on core competencies, according to a more generic model. This group reiterated the importance of communication; better communication, both internally and externally, could also enhance employment equity. The group addressed the question of accountability, recommending that every manager should be accountable for having best practices. The motto “what gets measured gets done” is relevant. These best practices should be integrated into performance agreements. In addition, an agency watch-dog or commissioner could be created to assure employment equity; such a model—the Commissioner for Racial Equity—already exists in the United Kingdom.

Embracing change should be integrated into day-to-day affairs, the group suggested; it should not just be something that is reported once a year. The public service should recognize the notion that diversity makes good business sense. In this way, the motivation to improve the system would come from within, not just from without. Participants brought attention, once again, to the British model of racial equity, with its motto, “Equal opportunities, equal access to all.” It was suggested that this model is more universally fair than is the Canadian model, which is limited to four designated minority groups.

Finally, the group addressed the problem of transparency and clear messages. Participants recommended that recruitment should be transparent. Job applicants should know what to expect when applying for jobs in the public service. They should be informed that hiring is done according to merit, and that employees and employers alike have both rights and obligations. The public service might include on its website a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the topic of employment equity. Furthermore, all departments should share common policies and messages with respect to the hiring of visible minorities.

Before moving to the third group, Crête asked participants to consider how they might effect institutional change in their departments. He also suggested employment equity should be integrated into the accountability process as part of human resources and business management plans.

A participant suggested it would be helpful if departments received money to implement these changes, but added that he realized this was unlikely.

The third group recommended using the contribution model, as is the case in the Office of the Auditor General, rather than the attribution model. In this way, the government could consider how each of the departments contributes to employment equity. One

participant suggested that public servants represent a uniform group in the eyes of the public; the public does not care what level of government they are from. She recommended a more seamless system, in which approaches to employment equity would be the same at all levels of government. Another participant added that the new Services Canada will, in fact, make the system more seamless. In this new service, a single person will represent more than one department.

It was suggested that public servants need to take notice of good models and borrow them; this constitutes creativity. Group members remarked that it is part of each department's obligations to make changes; departments are obliged to write annual reports documenting their progress. In addition, participants suggested the Inclusive Institutions Initiative as a model of joint programming.

## **Keynote Speaker: Reflecting Canada's Diversity—Opportunity for Change**

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### **Alain Dubuc, Le Soleil**

Alain Dubuc introduced his talk by explaining that, although he was not a specialist in multiculturalism, with 30 years of experience as a journalist writing about Canadian society, he could speak of the social debates that circle Canadian culture and questions of multiculturalism.

Rather than address the challenges of multiculturalism, Dubuc would discuss how the acceptance of multiculturalism by the majority might be achieved, and how changes in attitudes and workplaces might be arrived at. "If the changes you work on are not grounded in a democratic process, success may not be achievable," he warned.

Dubuc began by making an example of the current situation in the Netherlands. Once seen as a tolerant society, it has over the past few years made an alarming descent into racial tensions. The murders of a filmmaker and the leader of a fundamentalist right wing party have led to a terrible crisis. Racial tensions in the Netherlands would not be nearly so bad now, he argued, if the tolerant and peaceful nature of that society had not been taken for granted, and had bridges been built between immigrant and non-immigrant communities.

In Canada, Dubuc sees another example of disconnect between stated national values or policy and social reality—the question of same-sex marriage. While this may be a "wonderful, necessary change," public opinion polls on the subject may be misleading. "Scratch under the surface, and the unease is greater than you think," he noted. That this change is being imposed through the courts may lead to the sense that it is being forced. Bridges should be built between gays and heterosexuals or "we may see a backlash."



There is a connection, Dubuc argued, between the way same-sex marriage and multiculturalism are formally recognized. There is a tendency in both cases to impose these changes from above.

Stepping back to consider the question of national identity, Dubuc saw parallels between the construction of Canadian and Québécois identities. “They are both insecure, defensive nations that try to define themselves not by what they are but what they are not.” For example, Canadians are concerned with defining themselves against Americans.

When polled, Canadians identify justice (the Charter), solidarity (social security), and pluralism (bilingualism) as the pillars of Canadian society. “What is strange about those pillars is, they are very recent.” Recent and put in place from above, bilingualism and the Charter were Trudeau’s creation.

Multiculturalism, Dubuc asserted, “was an invention, not a product of our history.” The treatment of the Chinese and the First Nations speaks to this, as do the divisions between francophones and anglophones, anti-Semitism, and racism as a whole.

In fact, multiculturalism was a useful bit of political expedience at a time when political unrest in Québec threatened to divide the country. “Multiculturalism was a response to the danger of defining Canada through the binary thing of two opposed cultures. It was a political move decided on for political reasons.”

Righting past injustices that affected Franco-Canadians and Québécois was not an easy process: the organizational changes that had to be made were not easy to accept. Canadians still encounter the concept of “difference” with difficulty. As well, the dual identity of Québécois may remain a puzzle to Canadians outside the province. Multiculturalism opens the door to this kind of dual identity.

The First Nations are now in a situation akin to that of the francophones in Québec in the past, at the beginning of a process that should lead to recognition from French and English societies.

While multiculturalism has been easily mythologized as an appealing cultural asset, the reality of the possibly threatening changes it requires of institutions has been downplayed. Has its scope been exaggerated, Dubuc wondered, into a mythological difference that distinguishes Canada from the U.S.A.? “Multiculturalism describes a difference in the relationship between minorities,” but the actual changes in Canada of the past 25 years are the result of immigration, not changing social values.

Dubuc insisted that he was not being cynical. He meant to warn of the danger of constructing an identity on flimsy myths, or of imposing values from above without solid understanding at ground level. When problematic issues or conflicts arise, mythologies just might obstruct resolution.

This was not to deny the real progress that has been made. “That most people accept the necessity of immigration, that they don’t see immigrants as job stealers, that the change in the fabric of society is seen as an enhancement,” is evidence of real progress. In Montréal, polls show that people feel their lives in the city have improved over the past 20 years.

Challenges exist in the public service, though. As minorities join institutions, conflicting values may be exacerbated in light of current security issues and rising fundamentalism. “When you deal with the workplace, you have pitfalls, but you have some certainties—rights are rights. But when you deal with values, you don’t have those certainties.”

Sorting out conflicting rights can be thought provoking and worrying. The Charter may at times conflict with cultural rights. Québec has the issue of Bill 101 and the notwithstanding clause, and Ontario has the case of sharia law. “You have to trace a line: How much should we adjust to other communities?”

Stephen Harper’s argument that same-sex marriage is a threat to multiculturalism is symptomatic, Dubuc argued, of underlying unease and the confusion over conflicting rights. “This is where myths are not helpful,” he said.

Dubuc cited a story that had appeared in *Le Droit*. When a Black student was severely beaten after having suffered racist name-calling, the principal claimed the incident did not involve racism. This is an instance, Dubuc said, of a general fearful denial in Canada of problems common to many societies.

“There are so many taboo topics linked to diversity,” he continued. Decisions about immigration are crucial, yet we have not had open public discussions about it. A similar silence surrounds the issue of racial profiling. Great, positive changes—bilingualism for example—have been “forced on Canadians by a government who knows better,” leaving Westerners resentful. “Some great ideas can become bad ideas when forced on people.”

“The only way to deal with those dangers is to deal with things democratically. Not by a grassroots process—you can never ask the majority to judge on the rights of minorities. You need a process where you can have solid support and build legitimacy.” This can be achieved through communication—through the media, for example documentaries, and through public debates, “even if they are ugly, even if they show some tensions and unhealthy reactions.”

“This would be better than pretending that everything is perfect. Frank public debate would be useful. The basis of it all is democracy.”

## Questions and Comments

The first question referred to statistics showing that immigration is on the rise in Vancouver and Toronto, and decreasing in Montréal. Dubuc was asked if he could

explain this. Dubuc replied that, although Québec has attempted to increase immigration, attracting immigrants has been difficult, in part due to language issues.

Another audience member asked what the role of media should be in terms of encouraging multiculturalism. The issue for the media in Québec, Dubuc said, had been to “explain that immigration was essential...and enriched society.” As a journalist in Montréal, Dubuc said he had always thought it important “not to promote [multiculturalism], but integrate it.” That entailed including stories concerning different Montréal communities in the paper. Another tactic would be to hire journalists from different communities.

Another audience member spoke of the lack of diversity in Québec City, and the lack of representation of diverse communities in decisionmaking on the provincial stage. Referring to the recent incident of the student who had been beaten, the audience member pointed out that it had been reported that witnesses claimed that the victim had been the first one to attack. “It is strange...how victims are questioned. There’s a lot of work to do in schools and communities.”

A participant commented that, working as a lawyer, he could see political will in Québec to increase immigration, but many immigrants are English speaking and gravitate toward English speaking Canada. Québec should focus on retaining immigrants that arrive in the province. He encouraged Dubuc to continue his work in speaking out on social issues.

Dubuc noted that these issues were not merely questions of politics, but of our society. “The problem of immigration is a mirror of ourselves,” he said. “Societies want to be seen as beautiful; the law of silence is a way to cover up flaws.”

An audience member commented that Dubuc’s talk did not mention the role slavery had played in Canada. Noting that reparations have been made to Chinese Canadians, she asked, “Why is there this negation of this important and significant part of Canadian history? The Canadian economy was built on hundreds of years of free African labour.” Dubuc agreed, concluding, “It’s true that there are parts of our history that have been pushed away. It’s also true that the obsessive debate between the French and English had the effect of negating other issues.”

“For a long time, the official victims of Canada were the French. Then we lost that status and natives took that place. This will be the case as long as we don’t deal with those issues.”

## **Day 2 Plenary Session**

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### **Tina Namiesniowski, Director General, Multiculturalism and Human Rights**

Noting that diversity is crucial to the business world, Namiesniowski welcomed the participants to the second instructive day of the Forum to frame thoughts and identify future possibilities.

### **Daniel Weinstock: Looking Ahead—Where do we go from here?**

Daniel Weinstock, University of Montréal, spoke on the useful purpose that multiculturalism policy might serve the next generation of Canadians by 2017, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation.

He first explained that the policy's original purpose in the 1970s was to affirm the value of a multicultural society. That was at a time when Canadian society belonged to two founding ethnocultural groups—the English and French. However, Canada has since been profoundly changed by immigration and is now marked by visible minority diversity, most noticeably in major urban centres such as Toronto and Vancouver where visible minorities are predicted to be the majority by 2017. Yet the issue is not simply that the policy's objectives have been achieved. New aims must be defined.

To explain the context, Weinstock described multiculturalism policy in terms of its history and some fundamental aspects of Canadian institutions. Multiculturalism was originally conceived in the Trudeau era as part of a four-pronged approach, the other components being bilingualism from coast to coast, a just society, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter defines the equal and inviolable rights of each citizen. The just society and bilingualism elements address issues such as solidarity, distributive justice, and the use of two official languages in the public arena. Thus multiculturalism by necessity was left with characterizing the private self of Canadians.

As part of a nation-building strategy to create a common Canadian identity that embraced everyone—including Québécois—Weinstock said multiculturalism was really a political tool to diffuse political expression from all cultures. Multiculturalism said Québécois were different, but so is everyone else, and by giving up distinctness all cultures in fact gained a much larger stage and greater resources on which to affirm their own identities.

However, it is not obvious in what ways institutions, laws, and measures can rise above the original political intention, as multiculturalism is buffeted and restrained in various ways by the other three components of the Trudeau package. Weinstock said this question must be addressed based on the Charter if Canada is to define a future vision for multiculturalism.

To address this issue, Weinstock entered a distinction between two theoretical models of citizenship: the republican model and the multicultural model. The republican model is a decisively egalitarian model in which people have equal rights and obligations before the law and public institutions, regardless of differences in their private spheres, such as language, culture, religion, etc.; these differences have no political consequence. This model has been under a great deal of fire in multicultural times. A multicultural model of citizenship, on the other hand, allows citizens to be shaped by cultural belonging. Who you are matters politically, and cultural minorities can seek group rights and political protection to counter assimilation by the majority. The issue is how to compromise between citizens' rights and the rights of members of cultural communities.

Given the Canadian definition of multiculturalism in relation to our Charter of Rights, Weinstock said Canada is not really a multicultural society. There have been recent situations in which provincial governments—Québec and Newfoundland and Labrador—invoked clauses of the Charter to place primacy on the law protecting culture against Charter values, thus manifesting real political multiculturalism. However, the clauses are costly to invoke and can only be used by government, not minority communities.

What should multiculturalism be in the future? Weinstock said the major task is to deal with racism, especially in the workplace and residential neighbourhoods. According to the republican model, the Constitution and Charter guarantee equal rights to all people, but anti-racism says visible minorities and immigrants should not have more difficulty exercising their rights. To have real rights, Canada must take steps to ensure no institutional obstacles exist to stop people from exercising their rights. Therefore, anti-racism should be used in both models, especially in republican models.

However, Weinstock noted there is nothing distinctly multicultural about anti-racism. Rather, as a future vision of multiculturalism, he proposed a focus on the idea of culture in people's private sphere (dress, literature, music, etc.), addressing commonalities among different cultural and religious communities as well as recognizing their different political views and rights.

Weinstock suggested that one future option for Canadian institutionalized multiculturalism is to foster public discussion on a deeper multiculturalism policy, one that makes a political difference and negotiates a relationship between chartered values and cultural differences in the context of the Trudeau four-pronged approach. Through various health, education, and social service agencies, Canada can continue to serve its multicultural population, including breaking down racist boundaries, but Weinstock said this is simply justice and fairness, values that are important but not distinctly multicultural.

In summary, Weinstock said he believes the goals of the first phase of multiculturalism have largely been achieved, not only in Canadian society's surface culture, but also through people's attitudes. Society no longer belongs to any ethnocultural group in particular. In future years, Canadians need to address whether they desire a deeper form

of multiculturalism, one that relates culture to rights, and one that makes a political difference.

## Questions and Comments

A participant commented that in his view the multiculturalism made possible by republicanism—what he called liberal democracy—was not so starkly different from the multicultural model of citizenship. He said simply replacing the Canadian version of republicanism with the daily job of anti-racism is insufficient; integration, welcoming, and other strategies need also to be emphasized.

Weinstock agreed that both models of citizenship are versions of liberal democracy. His proposal to move to a deeper form of multiculturalism is really to view the issue from the perspective of minorities and to affirm certain rights as inviolable and fundamental. For example, some Muslims want to follow their family laws here in Canada, but the reaction has been that it is against the Charter. There needs to be greater understanding that culture does not stop at the public sphere but directly affects it, and anyone would be concerned with having rights respected irrespective of race and other characteristics. His proposal is to organize a more complex way of negotiating republicanism and multiculturalism.

Another participant noted that his vision of the future is not to pass from one majority to another but to have democratic values and limits in society that are socially justified and human rights justified.

Weinstock replied that this description is of liberal democracy and plain social justice, but multiculturalism is supposed to be distinct and different from that. It is more than having freedoms of religion and expression, etc., and placing limits on the majority in order to protect minorities and their cultures. Beyond ensuring that people have choice as to whether they wish to exercise their religion or assimilate, multiculturalism also puts structures in place to help minorities maintain aspects of their identity.

A delegate noted that the language of acceptance and tolerance of immigrants, visible minorities, and different religions is now being increasingly embraced, as is the protection of social justice and political rights regardless of origin or faith. Yet, human rights law must be attained, and issues concerning women and children are still very complex. She commented that it is still primarily men participating in the discussions.

Weinstock agreed, giving the example of the debate over sharia law. It is difficult to ensure the meaningful consent of both parties, the woman in particular, when a couple goes before an Islamic court rather than a Canadian court. The issue must be addressed with the main stakeholders, namely women. Weinstock added that there is also still a long way ahead with tolerance. Policies cannot dig into people's hearts and minds to make them like or embrace things they do not agree with.

## **Setting the Context for Reports from Concurrent Sessions**

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**Chair: Eileen Sarkar, Assistant Deputy Minister, Citizenship and Heritage**

### **Panel 1: Cities**

Chair Pablo Sobrino noted that the discussion revolved around how to integrate the four pillars of sustainability—economic, social, environmental, and cultural—in building cities and developing inclusion strategies. In particular, cities are natural places to which immigrants are drawn, but how can Canada create the market forces and welcoming communities to attract people to rural areas to ensure their diversity and repopulation, especially with the expected increase of qualified immigrants? Moreover, is class as important as ethnocultural diversity from the viewpoint of the marginalization of population? What policy adaptations are needed? And what are the implications of urban citizenship in the urban and rural context?

The federal government has tools to locate in rural areas and contribute to local economies, but greater policy and other collaboration is needed between the federal government and provincial/territorial governments, municipal governments, non-governmental organizations, and civil society. The vision must also include elastic policies across Canada and discussion with communities.

Some key concerns were raised. As the immigrant population eventually ages, issues must be addressed related to quality of life, safety, and perception of security. Also, excellent services for visible minorities and immigrants that tend to concentrate in cities need to be equally accessible in suburban areas where these populations are increasingly settling.

The group recommended several initiatives:

- Link rural repopulation to all levels of government to put in place immigration strategy and relevant policies, programs, and incentives.
- Entrench multiculturalism across all levels of government and society, and especially within communities.
- Define diversity to include issues of class.
- Consult cities and towns across Canada on what services and programs would help attract people.
- Focus equally on the four pillars of sustainability.
- Define citizenship to include access, expectations, responsibility, jurisdiction, and civic literacy.

### **Panel 2: Labour Markets**

Chair Ajit Mehat reported that workshop discussions came to the conclusion that labour markets are a subset of the broader issue of economic inclusion. Labour markets are defined as places where the exchange of supply and demand for labour services occur, but other important issues include the generation of business activity; the future role of visible minorities as consumers, employees, and sources of cultural knowledge; and the growing critical need for skilled human capital in the knowledge economy.

Moreover, labour market imperfections, such as racial discrimination, affect the way these markets function. Various legal frameworks are currently in place to deal with systemic barriers, such as the *Employment Equity Act* and *Canada's Action Plan Against Racism*, however Pendakur's study suggests that there is a growing earnings gap between Canadian born visible minorities and their White counterparts.

Other key concerns were identified. First, the *Employment Equity Act* only applies to federal jurisdictions, and affects just 10% of Canadian workers. Greater dialogue is needed with other levels of government and civil society. Second, there are hopeful signs related to concentration in larger cities, but the benefits could be negated by potential segregation, isolation, misperceptions, and other negative connotations related to the development of ethnic enclaves. The formation of ethnic enclaves indicates a need to prevent ghettoization and maintain the provision of social services.

Recessions hit visible minorities much harder, and there is evidence to suggest that earning differentials are not transitory. Further research is needed to understand the problems faced by visible minorities in the labour market, including labour market mobility and variations between different categories of visible minorities. Symptoms and root causes must be addressed.

In a broader context, visible minority diversity should be recognized as an asset for accessing other global markets (particularly emerging economies) and for contributing to innovation and new business solutions. Diversity programs must be linked to organizational purpose; foreign credential assessment must be addressed more effectively; and finally, productivity must be defined to include the concept of diverse teams working together.

### **Panel 3: Generational Challenges and Opportunities**

Chair Peter Hicks reported that this group discussed what is meant by "generations," and concluded that they were discussing the relationship between parents and children, and not other areas (such as generational mobility). These are difficult issues, but the "life-course" framework is a powerful analytical tool that can help in understanding their complexity.

Hicks noted that it is hard to disassociate issues related to children and parents from the general set of issues related to visible minority groups and recent immigrants. There is no



large distinction in the policies, whether the issues are framed as visible minority issues or recent immigrant issues: one tends to come up with the same kind of solutions.

Hicks noted that immigration and cultural differences affect the understanding of “family.” Expectations are different in a recent immigrant community than they are for those who have been here for several generations. There are also different concepts of care in a family setting—who gives care, and what it means. As well, there are different expectations regarding the role of government and community organizations vis-à-vis recent immigrant families. There is heterogeneity across generations, but also across different cultural groups.

Language is a key policy concern, especially for first-generation immigrants, older immigrants, and youth. Immigrants need the opportunity to learn English or French (to ease integration), but also to maintain the language of their home country (to maintain multiculturalism). Canada does not always do either well, and policies need to focus on language as a top priority.

Different orders of government (provincial and federal) do not have the same vision regarding multiculturalism, recent immigrants, and visible minority groups, nor are channels across federal departments working well. Government needs to foster co-operation in service delivery, perhaps by modelling policy development on the health agreement (which involved both federal and provincial levels of government).

Access to services is important, and should include language training, culturally specific services, and diversity training in the public service. Government also needs to reinforce existing policy agendas, giving priority to settlement programs. Another key priority is the recognition of foreign qualifications, which should take place before immigrants arrive. Furthermore, multiculturalism should be given the same “teeth” as the official languages program.

The group concluded that most of the challenges and issues related to 2017 are probably not much different than those for 2007.

#### **Panel 4: Health and Social Services**

Chair Caroline Weber noted that this group focused primarily on health care, with panellist Jacqueline Oxman-Martinez noting that inequalities for immigrants mean that the determinants of health have a differential impact. Another factor that has not been taken into account is the pre-migration environment: an individual’s “migration trajectory” has a huge impact. In addition, many of the yearlong programs for immigrants do not get people through the full period of adjustment as they adapt psychologically to the new community. Oxman-Martinez also suggested that bureaucrats should integrate policy regimes, at least at the federal level.

Weber summarized the interventions by discussants, who listed some of the challenges in providing health care to immigrants. Language barriers limit access and diagnosis, and the mobility of new arrivals makes service delivery harder. The systemic barriers extend as far down as the practitioner level (e.g. booking appointments becomes very problematic).

Organizations need to foster and support innovation and creativity, which requires a certain tolerance for “messiness.” New people and ideas are required in order to prepare for the unexpected. There is also a need for collaboration rather than competition, and for health promotion that enables people to participate and work together.

Participants raised a number of key concerns, including the need for a holistic approach to health (encompassing physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects). They also commented on the need to distinguish between discrimination and barriers, because there are systemic issues that create unintended consequences.

The lack of cultural literacy amongst both service providers and recipients is a real challenge. It is also necessary to make distinctions between classes of immigrants: people immigrating as family members and as members of specific economic classes are different from regular migrants.

Capacity issues are another concern: new communities are not institutionalized, and there needs to be some way of supporting these communities (given the current absence of core funding).

The group discussed the need for effective implementation, noting that it is not enough simply to develop a program. All programs should be evaluated to see how well they are working for immigrants, and this should include participatory forms of evaluation.

It was noted that organizations are generally slow to adapt to demographic change. Hiring a few individuals from a particular ethnocultural community is not enough. Change would probably result if organizations reassessed their service delivery in relation to their own mission statements.

Discussing barriers and impediments to access to health care and improved health outcomes, the group concluded that results could be achieved by focusing on justice and fairness issues. Initiatives should focus on cultural literacy—not diversity training or non-discrimination, but understanding people's basic values. This would help in identifying and responding to differences.

The federal government also needs to extend policy integration across all its departments, add a multicultural lens to policy development, fund pilot projects and showcase effective communities. It may also be useful to benchmark private sector systems that are addressing these issues.

The group concluded with a vision for the future: “We will improve each other.” People can learn from each other, integrating values in some areas while preserving the differences in others.

### **Panel 5: Public Institutions**

The public service needs to be reviewed with a focus on leadership, accountability, employment equity, diversity training, mentoring, and measurement, reported Chair Raymond Crête. Ultimately, the public service needs more workplace diversity. Canada needs to move beyond the stage of awareness to implementation. This should include better implementation of existing measures and perhaps the creation of an annual report on multiculturalism.

Immigrant underemployment is tied to the issue of accreditation: change is needed in this area, in time to help the current generation.

Managers need the capacity to deal with diversity questions and to push the envelope further. This can include recruitment, outreach, representation on selection boards, tools to evaluate people, and efforts to ensure that the system is barrier-free. Many of these tools currently exist, but more work needs to be done to share best practices and tools so that all federal public institutions can be consistent in their approach.

These challenges in employment equity have been dealt with in the past (with regard to official bilingualism, women, and people with disabilities), and the public service could learn from experience. There also needs to be much more outreach in recruitment and in processing applications, to ensure that everyone understands the process.

The public service needs to hold every manager accountable, integrating employment equity into the accountability framework within the overall business plan and management training process. Organizations must review recruitment and core competencies to ensure that practices are transparent.

### **Questions and Comments**

A Health Canada participant commented that needs are changing, and suggested the need for a more balanced relationship between cultures, transforming the dynamic from tolerance to respect.

Peter Hicks acknowledged that the demography in 2017 would be much different. There will be a huge demand for labour, and it will be in everyone's interest for people in minority situations to be more fully included in the labour market. This will be a world with more incentives for developing tolerance and valuing diversity.

A participant commented that the discussion on generational issues did not address the economic impact of the aging population. How can social programs meet all the growing needs if visible minority groups and Aboriginal people do not have the jobs to contribute to the tax base?

Hicks noted that when baby boomers start retiring in seven or eight years, there will be new demand for labour. This will create pressure for increased immigration, and for drawing into the mainstream those who are currently marginalized.

A participant from the Department of Justice noted that with regard to diversity and employment equity in federal departments, there is a perception that the existing legal framework is good but its application falls short. How can this issue be addressed?

Ajit Mehat said that his group had discussed the gaps in the legal framework related to federal-provincial jurisdiction. The group's sense was that there is a need to engage the partners involved, and create dialogue in the federal/provincial/territorial context, to identify the gaps in application.

Another participant commented on the role of the education system, and the need to include youth in the discussion.

Pablo Sobrino noted that the federal government has a role in fostering multiculturalism, but so do other levels of government. Perhaps the federal role is to lead the rest of society into discussions of multiculturalism. There is also a role for both new and established citizens—a responsibility to be literate, recognize jurisdictional issues and participate in the processes to address issues related to multiculturalism.

## **Closing Remarks**

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### **The Honourable Raymond Chan, Minister of State (Multiculturalism)**

Minister Chan reflected on the fact that those in government have a purpose and are doing important work. He added that there is a need for more funding to deal with issues related to multiculturalism, and thanked the Forum participants for their interest and enthusiasm in helping the Government of Canada understand the impacts of demographic change and the subsequent issues that will need concerted attention.

Earlier in the week, the Government of Canada announced the first-ever federal effort to combat racism and discrimination. It is an action plan—not just a policy—that has received \$56 million in funding for new and continuing concrete initiatives to realize the shared Canadian vision of an inclusive and equitable society. (*Canada's Action Plan Against Racism* is available at the Department of Canadian Heritage website: [www.pch.gc.ca](http://www.pch.gc.ca)).

There are two things that hold people back and obstruct participation, said the Minister—discrimination and barriers to economic participation. Canada provides opportunities that can be found nowhere else in the world. Yes, he said, discrimination hurts, but job integration and economic opportunity have a greater impact than racism. He acknowledged, though, that not everyone can overcome obstacles of discrimination easily: “We have to confront racism head on.”

Minister Chan expressed gratitude to the Forum organizers, panellists, and participants. Together, he concluded, it is the responsibility of policymakers, decision makers, and community leaders to confront the challenges faced by Canada.

Following his closing remarks, Minister Chan presented a video highlighting the RCMP's community development approach in Richmond, B.C.—a model city that is facing the kinds of challenges being discussed at this conference.