



CANADA URGED TO CHOOSE SKILLED MIGRANTS TO AVOID LABOUR SHORTAGES

Mr. Glen Hodgson, Chief Economist of the Conference Board of Canada (CBC), an Ottawa based think tank group, has urged the Canadian government to modernize its immigration policies so that labor shortages do not suppress future economic growth. He also recommended the government to give importance to the skills of prospective migrant workers vis-à-vis Canada's labor needs.

In his report, Mr. Hodgson stated that "a country's long-term potential for economic growth is essentially driven by three factors: growth in the labour force (and total hours worked), investment in physical capital, and increased productivity." He further stated that while Canada's workforce has generally grown faster than other industrialized countries in recent decades, it has lagged in capital investments and improvement of productivity.

The report of the Conference Board called for the following measures:

- streamlining of Canada's immigration system to reduce misalignment among different levels of government;
- expansion of the use of the temporary foreign worker programs to fill short-term gaps in labour markets;
- involvement of employers in immigration policy-making;
- improvement of foreign credential recognition processes; and
- easing the permanent residency requirements for temporary foreign workers and foreign students.

The proposed changes in the immigration policy are expected to result to an increase in the immigration levels to about 350,000 yearly by 2030 from the government's current target of 265,000.