



NEWS RELEASE

2006-08

MINISTERS MEET ON AN ATLANTIC APPROACH TO IMMIGRATION

HALIFAX, August 9, 2006 - The Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, met today with the four Atlantic ministers responsible for immigration to explore ways of working together to increase the number of immigrants to Atlantic Canada. The provincial ministers invited Minister Solberg to join them for the Atlantic Immigration Ministers Forum, a session aimed at enhancing dialogue and collaboration on immigration in the Atlantic region.

“I’m very pleased to be meeting with my provincial colleagues on attracting and retaining immigrants to Atlantic Canada,” said Minister Solberg. “This joint initiative speaks to the importance of immigration to this region.”

Nova Scotia Minister Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, host of the forum, highlighted its importance. “Our region has tremendous advantages to offer newcomers and by working together with my colleagues in Atlantic Canada, we can help ensure individuals are aware of those advantages,” she said. “Of course, of critical importance for all of us is helping newcomers settle successfully in our region.”

The ministers discussed the unique demographic and labour market situation in Atlantic Canada. They recognized the role of communities and immigration organizations in attracting and integrating newcomers and agreed to continue to work with them.

“We are committed to raising awareness of the Atlantic provinces as a destination of choice for immigrants, increasing our population and productivity, attracting investment and jobs, and working on skill shortages and labour market gaps. Atlantic ministers take this issue very seriously and are prepared to work together and with our federal partners,” said Michael F. Currie, Minister responsible for Prince Edward Island’s Business Development Inc.

“Immigration is extremely important to the Atlantic provinces. Even the smallest communities benefit from immigrants who start businesses and who offer vital services, especially in the health-care sector,” said Paul Shelley, Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment for Newfoundland and Labrador. “Communities also benefit from increased diversity and innovative ideas brought by immigrants. I am pleased to work with my Atlantic colleagues and the federal government to increase immigration to our respective provinces.”

The ministers also talked about the significance of effective integration services in retaining immigrants.

“We’re very happy that the federal government is currently taking steps to ensure that immigrants in Atlantic Canada receive the same services as those living in other parts of the country,” said New Brunswick’s Minister Responsible for the Immigration and Repatriation Secretariat, Percy Mockler.

“While I acknowledge that support for immigrants settling in our region must be further improved, I must tip my hat to the federal minister for his energetic and innovative approach to this issue.”

“I look forward to working closely and collaboratively with my colleagues in exploring approaches to increasing newcomers to this region of the country and retaining them,” concluded Minister Solberg.

- 30 -

For further information (media only):

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Minister Solberg’s Office:

Lesley Harmer
Director of Communications
613-954-1064

Atlantic Regional Office:

Patrick Brownlow
Communications Consultant
902-430-7227

Nova Scotia Office of Immigration

Mary Anna Jollymore
Communications
902-424-3742