Lessons From the Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDAs)

Friday, March 22, 2002 – More and more Canadians today are being helped by provincial active labour market measures. Training and skill development, business start-up assistance, career information and income supports are helping thousands of workers to strengthen their position in the job market.

In 1996, the federal government introduced its new Employment Insurance Act, which allowed for new flexibility in response to emerging regional, demographic, economic and technological challenges. Ottawa entered into negotiations with the provinces and territories to establish partnerships for the delivery of active labour market measures. Alberta was the first province to sign an LMDA in December, 1996. All jurisdictions, but Ontario, have now signed similar agreements.

Last month, five years after the birth of the first LMDA, CPRN hosted a conference on behalf of Alberta Human Resources and Employment to take stock of the LMDA experience. The conference drew delegates from all provinces and territories, representing public, private, and non-profit stakeholders, academics and other experts. They discussed current challenges and opportunities, best practices and innovative programming from across the country.

The discussions were animated by numerous presentations by senior government officials, other leaders in the field and academics. The presentations covered topics such as the history of the LMDA experience from federal and provincial perspectives, international comparisons of labour market policies, indicators for assessing labour market outcomes, support to lifelong learning, programs for persons with disabilities and the future of labour market policy.

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