



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



TRIEC

Toronto Region Immigrant
Employment Council



BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Invitation to participate in an interactive dialogue on
“Employing Refugees”
Toronto, 30 May 2017
(for employers and business organisations only)

Since the mid1970s, the United States and Canada have resettled hundreds of thousands refugees through government-assisted and in Canada private sponsorship schemes as part of its long tradition to assist refugees. Thanks to the support they receive, refugees bring economic and social benefits to the host communities and the economy, as producers, consumers and taxpayers.

While refugees were selected because of their protection needs, they also bring with them a multitude of professional skills and experiences, constituting a potential resource for employers. Thanks to the strong involvement of civil society and private businesses, most refugees have been successfully integrated. In recent years, more than 250 000 permanent migrants have been welcomed to Canada annually, most under the economic immigration categories, while refugees constituted only a relatively small part of new arrivals.

Recognizing these opportunities, UNHCR and the OECD whom have been working closely together to support refugees labour market integration, is joining Immigration, Refugee, Citizenship Canada and TRIEC to support this goal in the Canadian context. As potential employers of refugees, the private sector should inform our policies and this interactive dialogue will allow all of us to learn from our respective experiences.

Through a series of regional dialogues on ‘Employing Refugees’, OECD and UNHCR have been bringing together employers and employers’ organizations to share lessons learned on how to promote refugee employment. Such dialogues have taken place in Brussels (July 2016) on an EU-level as well as for Nordic countries (Copenhagen, September 2016) and German-speaking countries (Munich, December 2016): see OECD-UNHCR -2016. To broaden our perspective, it is now key to better understand the context in which North American employers and refugees interact on the job market.

The regional dialogue for North America will largely focus on the Canadian experience but will also welcome the contribution of US employers. It will take the form of a half-day interactive workshop with three employer-driven break-out sessions seeking to identify the main opportunities and challenges and develop concrete recommendations to better support companies to employ refugees.

The regional dialogue is expected to hear from employers on ***What challenges are facing employers in the recruitment and employment of refugees? What additional measures businesses would need to hire more resettled refugees?***

This dialogue is a unique opportunity to share your experience to share best practices, and to develop a set of concrete recommendations. The ultimate result of this series of regional consultations with employers will be encapsulated into a joint OECD-UNHCR action plan, “Engaging with employers for hiring refugees” that will inform OECD and UNHCR’s work in this area. This will be presented to other key stakeholders working in this area, and will feed into ongoing discussions on a forthcoming UN Global Compact of Refugees.

The dialogue will take place on May 30 (7.45 am – 12.30 pm) in the premises of the Royal Bank of Canada in Toronto (RBC, Royal Bank Plaza, 200 Bay Street, South Tower, 40th Floor, Toronto). It will be followed with an optional roundtable discussion (2.00 pm – 4.00 pm) on “what do Canadian businesses need to be able to identify and recruit potential employees from refugee populations throughout the world based on existing immigration or employment visa schemes?” The draft agenda of the meeting is attached.

We would be grateful if you could nominate a person from your company to participate in this dialogue who can suitably contribute to the discussions. Please also indicate if you would like to attend the roundtable discussion in the afternoon as well. We very much look forward to your response by 15 May 2017, which may be sent by e-mail to: John.LOYD@oecd.org.

Sincerely yours,

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