



OPINION

Our continued prosperity depends on an expanded and effective immigration system

With the recent announcement of immigration targets the government has taken an important step in the right direction. The next step is more challenging and requires sufficiently resourced processes to facilitate timely immigration and, most importantly, settlement support systems to ensure new residents and citizens have the best opportunity to integrate and contribute to society.



Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen. Canada has a proud track record of welcoming newcomers; one million immigrants arrived to Canada through Pier 21 in Halifax, N.S., from 1928 and 1971 and most recently Canadian communities opened their doors to over 40,000 Syrian refugees. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

By DONALD IGBOKWE ([http://www.hilltimes.com/author-stories/?author=Donald Igbokwe](http://www.hilltimes.com/author-stories/?author=Donald%20Igbokwe))

PUBLISHED :Monday, Nov. 20, 2017 12:00 AM

Canada's population is aging, its workforce shrinking, and productivity is declining. If we do not take steps to reverse these trends now, Canada will not have the human resources to sustain the very things that we cherish as a country—our health care and education systems or the outstanding quality of life we are fortunate to enjoy.

In order to secure a prosperous future for the next generation of Canadians, the Government of Canada has made innovation a priority and has taken further steps to invest in Canada's infrastructure. The government has also introduced improvements to immigration programs such as the express entry program and the international student program, the Atlantic Immigration Pilot program and the Global Skills Strategy.

A vital component of an economic growth agenda for Canada is an effective and expanded immigration system. To this end, the Canadian Association of Professional Immigration Consultants (CAPIC) welcomed the recent announcement from Minister of Immigration Ahmed Hussen that Canada would incrementally increase our immigration targets through to the year 2020.

These modest increases in our immigration levels further a Canadian vision for economic strength consistent with our cultural fabric as a country of immigrants.

The number of economic migrants, family reunifications, and refugees will increase from 300,000 to 310,000 in 2018. That number will continue to rise to 330,000 in 2019 and then 340,000 in 2020.

Decisions on a multi-year immigration plan and measures to improve economic and social integration are crucial for our country's prosperity and our social well-being. CAPIC applauds the government for listening to stakeholders and taking the important steps to ensure a diverse and prosperous future for Canada.

At a time when anti-immigrant sentiments and the politics of fear drive isolationist policy measures in other countries, it is more important than ever for Canada to remain an example of the promise and prosperity of multiculturalism. Our government must remain committed to welcoming immigrants—those fleeing persecution and those drawn to opportunity or reunification.

Canada has a proud track record of welcoming newcomers; one million immigrants arrived to Canada through Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia from 1928 and 1971 and most recently Canadian communities opened their doors to over 40,000 Syrian refugees.

The hard truth is that Canada cannot realize its full economic potential—or even maintain the productivity needed to support essential social programs—without increasing immigration and supporting successful settlement and integration.

New Canadians have always contributed positively to the Canadian economy. As the Economic Advisory Panel pointed out in its fall 2016 recommendations, if Canada were to welcome 450,000 newcomers per year, our country's real GDP would grow by an average of 2.05 per cent annually, with immigration contributing to nearly one-third of the economic growth.

Immigration is an essential contributor to Canada's economy. However, increased immigration levels would create economic and fiscal pressures if Canada does not effectively address the labour market challenges that immigrants often experience. A recent Conference Board report estimates that underemployment causes immigrants to not benefit from up to \$12.7-billion in wages each year. The employment and social barriers that newcomers experience are preventing Canada from fully securing the economic benefits to which immigration contributes.

Effectively increasing immigration numbers also requires addressing the myths and misconceptions around immigration and its impact on the country, our economy and our social support systems. Conversations on Canada's immigration levels should go beyond the numbers to include how Canada can better integrate immigrants into society, provide culturally appropriate services, and address labor market shortages.

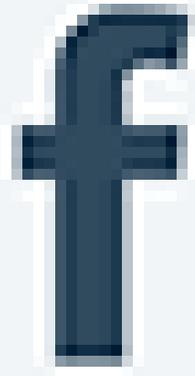
Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultants (RCICs) serve a vital role in Canada's immigration process, both by ensuring new Canadians and permanent residents feel welcome and secure, and by helping to facilitate the immigration process. Immigration consultants help applicants navigate the intricacies of coming to Canada; they ensure applications are completed properly, and reduce the burden on government officials.

With the recent announcement of immigration targets the government has taken an important step in the right direction. The next step is more challenging and requires sufficiently resourced processes to facilitate timely immigration and, most importantly, settlement support systems to ensure new residents and citizens have the best opportunity to integrate and contribute to society.

Donald Igbokwe is a regulated Canadian immigration consultant and the president of the Canadian Association of Professional Immigration Consultants.

The Hill Times

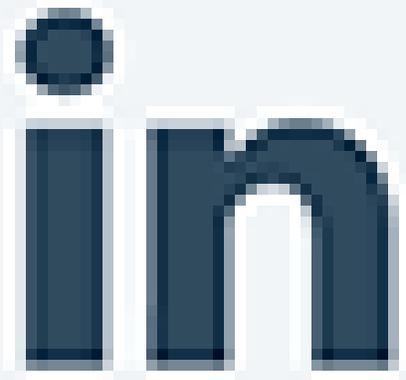
Donald Igbokwe is a regulated Canadian immigration consultant (RCIC) and the president of the Canadian Association of Professional Immigration Consultants. He is also the president of One World Immigration Consulting Services. (<http://www.hilltimes.com/author-bio?AuID=109883>)



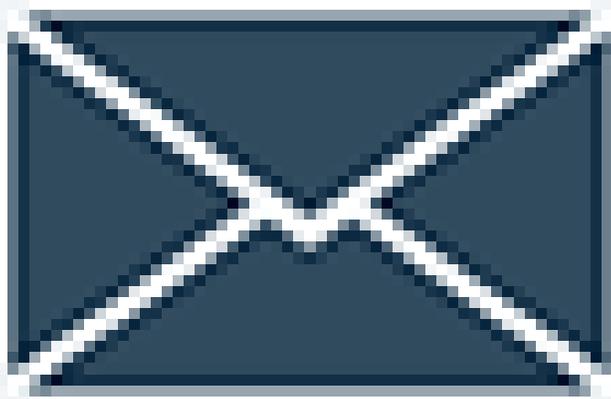
(<https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=http://www.hilltimes.com/2017/11/20/continued-prosperity-depends-expanded-effective-immigration-system/125508>)



(<https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=ISSUE: 11-20-2017&url=http://www.hilltimes.com/2017/11/20/continued-prosperity-depends-expanded-effective-immigration-system/125508&via=thehilltimes>)



([https://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&url=http://www.hilltimes.com/2017/11/20/continued-prosperity-depends-expanded-effective-immigration-system/125508&title=Our continued prosperity depends on an expanded and effective immigration system](https://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&url=http://www.hilltimes.com/2017/11/20/continued-prosperity-depends-expanded-effective-immigration-system/125508&title=Our%20continued%20prosperity%20depends%20on%20an%20expanded%20and%20effective%20immigration%20system))



License Article

(<http://www.hilltimes.com/ht-promo-reuse/>)

Tags:

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL IMMIGRATION CONSULTANTS (CAPIC) | CANADIAN IMMIGRATION |
CANADIAN IMMIGRATION CONSULTANTS | ECONOMIC ADVISORY PANEL | MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION AHMED HUSSEN

More Stories In This Section