**Breakout 6 – Place-Based Approaches to Maximize Benefits of Economic Development and Workforce Development Strategies**

**Session at a Glance**

Session Time: 14:45 – 16:15

Meeting Room: Cartier B

Discussion Topics: Recognizing distinct needs in official language minority, urban, rural, remote and Indigenous communities and yielding the greatest return through comprehensive economic development and workforce development approaches, including a particular emphasis on industry reliant communities in transition.

Panelists:

* Moderator: **Rachel Samson**, Vice President, Research, Institute for Research on Public Policy
* Panelist 1: **Carolann Harding**, CEO, SmartICE
* Panelist 2: **Étienne Alary**, Director General, Parallèle Alberta
* Panelist 3: **Yasi Shahidian**, Prime Minister’s Youth Council Member

**Key Issues**

* The negative effects of a displaced workforce will be felt disproportionately among rural residents, who make up the majority of high-risk employment sectors.
* In more than 1,800 rural and remote communities in Canada an average of 30% of the local labour force is dependent on natural resource sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy and mining.
* Access to broadband (at 50/10 Mbps unlimited) poses a challenge for rural communities (62%), which lag behind the rest of Canada (91.4%).
* Official Language Minority Communities across Canada continue to face a variety of labour market challenges, which are often unique to a particular region or even a small community. This includes inconsistent service offerings in French varying from region to region, and the difficulty faced by English-speaking youth entering the workforce in Quebec.

**Government Action**

* *Labour Market Development Agreements and the Workforce Development Agreements* – As announced in Budget 2024, the Government of Canada continues to provide nearly $3 billion per year to provinces and territories to ensure Canadians continue to have access to skills training and labour market supports to take advantage of economic opportunities. Each year, approximately one million Canadians receive supports under these agreements.
* *Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF)* – The SPF is a project-based program that funds partnerships between Indigenous organizations and industry employers to provide skills training for Indigenous people linked to economic opportunities at the local, regional, and national level.
* *Canada Retraining and Opportunities Initiative* – provides funding of $30 million over two years to organizations helping workers and local communities affected by mass layoffs. The initiative complements existing federal, provincial, and territorial programs by providing additional support to help laid-off workers transition to new jobs.
* *The Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities (EF-OLMC)*  – funds 14 OLMC organizations (CEDEC in Quebec and 13 organizations in the REDEE network) to support economic and workforce development (approximately $95M over 5 years in Gs&Cs).

**Points to Register**

* Rural areas contribute 25% of Canada’s GDP and provides vital economic inputs that interconnect with urban areas to drive the overall national economy.
* Place-based approaches are an area of growing interest that could help to identify ways to maximize regional and national economic development investments by better aligning workforce development strategies.
* As communities transition from declining sectors to growth areas, as well as advancing climate change adaptations, these communities face unique circumstances to be addressed.

**Questions to Raise**

* How can the federal government most effectively support smaller regions to address their unique needs?
* How can the federal government support Indigenous people in remote communities to advance self determination and self goverance?