**Breakout 5 – Better Aligning Workforce Development Strategies with Economic Priorities**

**Session at a Glance**

Session Time: 14:45 – 16:15

Meeting Room: Plenary Room

Discussion Topics: Identifying economic priority areas of focus in growth sectors, effective practices to overcome barriers to participation (e.g., upskilling initiatives, work-integrated learning, competency-based approaches), and to meet domestic needs such as housing and green buildings; agriculture, biomanufacturing; transportation and supply chains; critical minerals.

Panelists:

* Moderator: **The Honourable Rechie Valdez**, Minister of Small Business
* Panelist 1: **Claudette McGowan**, CEO, Protexxa
* Panelist 2: **Penny Walsh McGuire**, CEO, Canadian Alliance for Skills & Training in Life Sciences (CASTL)
* Panelist 3: **Nathalie Arguin**, Secrétaire générale, Confédération des syndicats nationaux

**Key Issues**

* As Canada advances in becoming a modern, digitally enabled, net-zero economy, aligning skills development and training programs with strategic growth areas is key.
* Over the next 10 to 20 years, up to 400,000 jobs could be added where an enhanced skill set will be critical.
* New opportunities are already being created in the clean energy and renewable battery industries, and some 46% of new jobs will be in natural resources and agriculture. Also, 40% of those in trades, transport and equipment could require enhanced skills due to the transition to a net-zero economy.

**Government Action**

* The Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program (SWSP) is a contributions program that helps key sectors of the economy implement solutions to address their current and emerging workforce needs. Budget 2024 announced new SWSP investments to support workers and employers in key areas that align with government priorities.
* Through the 2022 Fall Economic Statement and Budget 2023, the Government of Canada announced a Sustainable Jobs Training Centre to help workers upgrade or gain new skills for jobs in the low-carbon economy. Now called the Sustainable Jobs Training Fund, it will support a series of training projects that will help 15,000 workers upgrade or gain new skills for jobs in the low-carbon economy.
* The Skills and Partnership Fund (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.
* The Student Work Placement Program (SWPP) supports the creation of work-integrated learning opportunities for Canadian post-secondary students, in priority sectors including, agriculture, biotechnology, and transportation. The Program supports students to develop work-ready skills, employers to hire and develop talent, and post-secondary institutions to keep pace with changing on-the-job expectations.
* The significant role of the construction sector and the important number of Red Seal trades it employs is directly reflected through the Canadian Apprenticeship Strategy. The Strategy’s program offerings provide supports to skilled trades key sectors of the economy, including the construction sector.
* Budget 2024 announced $100 million through the Canadian Apprenticeship Strategy initiatives, to create apprenticeship opportunities to train and recruit the next generation of skilled trades workers.
* Canada has undertaken a review of our temporary resident programs, to better align with labour market needs, to protect against abuses in the system, and to match our capacity to build new homes. Starting this fall, the Immigration Levels Plan will include both temporary resident admissions and permanent resident admissions to ensure a well-managed, responsive, and sustainable immigration system.
* The Future Skills Centre’s project with the Canadian Alliance for Skills and Training in Life Sciences (CASTL) was to design a workplace-based learning program that set skills standards in the biosciences sector. CASTL’s ability to train has facilitated the growth of biosciences industry in PEI – Bio Vectra, a large successful biopharmaceutical manufacturer in PEI credits its rapid expansion since 2019 to CASTL.
* Subsequent Government investments enable Mitacs, a national organization, to create high-value, industry-focused work-integrated learning opportunities, for students and postdoctoral fellows through industry partnerships with academia across all disciplines.

**Points to Register**

* The Government of Canada’s economic policy aims to build a green, digital and resilient Canadian economy through whole-of-government efforts.
* Canada has world-class reserves of critical minerals, ranking first in mining potential in 2022, as determined by global companies in the sector.
* A sustainable economy is green and inclusive by design.
* Businesses in industries critical for the net-zero transition are already making significant investments. Other priority areas in the net-zero economy include electric vehicles, the battery supply chain, renewable energy and carbon capture technologies.
* It is imperative that students graduate ready to meet on-the-job expectations as they are a primary source for replenishing the labour force. Work-integrated learning is key to supporting post-secondary students to develop the skills they need to transition successfully into the workforce.
* The Government’s generational investments will promote Canada’s industrial advantages in strong sectors such as digital and clean technologies, aerospace, natural resources including Canada’s agriculture and agri-food sector.

**Questions to Raise**

* What are additional economic priorities that should be considered?
* Which priorities need more support through labour market programming?
* How can the Government better support Indigenous communities to advance their economic priorities in identified growth sectors?