

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

Good afternoon

- I hope you found the time to visit some of the historical sites or are planning to stay a bit longer to enjoy the hospitality of Québec City and the surrounding area. Hopefully the "authentic" Canadian weather added to your enjoyment of this great city.
- It has been a pleasure to spend the last two days with you. Based on what I have heard, this has been a productive workshop that has profiled successes from across the region and provided a space for dialogue on common challenges.
- Economists recognize labour market information as “the grease that oils labour market efficiency”. The collection, analysis and dissemination of this information can help inform individuals, businesses and governments in decision making. The effects of those decisions can be lower unemployment and better economic growth – important issues at any time, but perhaps more now than any other time in recent memory.
- In Canada, some regions are facing high unemployment rates and layoffs, while other regions are facing labour shortages. The ongoing challenge for us, in Canada, is to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach in producing, analyzing, and disseminating critical labour market information in order to provide timely and accurate information for our citizens and to support both employers and workers through sometimes difficult transitions in the labour market associated with rapid changes in the economy.
- I encourage you to continue to work on improving your information systems to provide information and policy advice that is responsive, accurate and useful to your governments, employers and workers.
- I would also like to say a few words on labour migration. The global economy has an impact on migration – whether the economy is strong and growing or in decline. As was highlighted in the panel on The Challenges of Managing Migration and Mobility,

countries across the Americas are dealing with the constantly changing dynamics of international migration. Maintaining good relationships with our neighbours in the Americas and continuing to monitor and study the current situation are priorities for Canada.

- We know that at the Summit of the Americas that will take place in Trinidad and Tobago in April, the current global economic crisis will be a high priority for every government and every Leader. Topics discussed here over the last two days on the impact of the economy on labour markets were most timely as it helped us better understand the challenges we are facing and will, hopefully, contribute to the efforts of our governments in finding different solutions to respond to the crisis.
- We are happy to have been able to bring all of you together for this event and we look forward to our future work with the Organization of American States. I hope that over the past two days, you have been able to build networks and dialogue on issues that are of benefit to your work and better understand the importance of labour market information in the context of your own economies and its link to improving labour market efficiency in your own countries.
- Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Department of Social Development and Employment of the Organization of American States, the Office for Inter-American Labour Cooperation of the Labour Program and the wider HRSDC department for organizing this successful workshop. Thank you Mr. Pilotti and Ms. Camacho: your department has been an excellent partner and it was a pleasure to work with you and your staff in co-hosting this workshop.
- Thank you all for your participation and I wish you all safe travels back to your homes.