



## PRESS RELEASE



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### **Minister Fontana Releases Details of New Affordable Housing Flexibilities and Announces National Consultation on Housing**

**OTTAWA, Ontario, December 3, 2004** — Minister of Labour and Housing Joe Fontana today announced the details of the flexibilities he delivered to the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for housing, during their Federal-Provincial-Territorial meeting on Tuesday, in Gatineau, Quebec.

At the meeting, the ministers discussed modifications to current affordable housing programs that will accelerate the production of affordable housing for low to moderate income Canadians.

"We made important progress in moving forward on flexibilities in the affordable housing programs to address provincial and territorial priorities and circumstances and to address housing needs of Canadians more quickly," said Minister Fontana. "The excellent tone of cooperation and goodwill of our meeting resulted in support for a long term housing approach that will strengthen the housing continuum across the country and better meet the housing needs of all Canadians."

The Ministers agreed to continue discussions and review progress at a meeting in the spring of 2005.

In addition, Minister Fontana indicated to his provincial and territorial colleagues that he would be launching national consultations in January to develop a longer term Canadian Housing Framework. Details regarding the consultations will be announced in the coming weeks.

"I am looking forward to discussions with my provincial and territorial colleagues as well as hearing the views of a broad range of stakeholders and Canadians," he added. "There are lots of creative ideas out there and we need to find new ways to unleash the capacity of governments, communities and other partners to respond to housing need."

The new modifications recognize the different circumstances and housing needs faced by each province or territory and open up new ways in which those needs can be served.

Highlights include the following:

- Home ownership projects for low-income families will be eligible for funding under both phases of the Affordable Housing Program.
- Provincial and territorial housing spending under unilaterally delivered affordable housing programs will be recognized as a contribution under the Affordable Housing Program.
- The acquisition and repair of existing buildings for re-use as affordable housing for low-income households will be eligible under the Program.

Prior to the meeting, Minister Fontana and Nova Scotia Community Services and Housing Minister David Morse met with representatives from housing interest groups including the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian

Canadian Mortgage News - Minister Fontana Releases Details of New Affordable Housing Flexibilities and ...

Housing Renewal Association, Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, National Aboriginal Housing Association and the National Housing and Homelessness Network. As a follow-up to the Aboriginal Sectoral Session held the week before, they also met with the National Aboriginal Organizations including Assembly of First Nations, Council of Aboriginal Peoples, Inuit Tapirisat Kanatami, Métis National Council and the Native Women's Association of Canada.

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