

## ALBERTA ECONOMIC UPDATE– November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015

The Council for Canada is continuing a series of initiatives in response to the changing economic conditions in Alberta. As part of this process, the Council would like to provide the Jamat with an economic update.

As the jamat is aware, the economy of Alberta is facing a slowdown, mainly due to weakness in the price of oil. This is particularly difficult after Alberta has led the nation in economic growth over the past years and is now moving more in line with the rest of the country. For example, the unemployment rate for Alberta increased to 6.6% versus a decrease to 7.0% for the rest of Canada.

The Bank of Canada and other economists are predicting that the province may rebound by the second half of 2016.

This slowdown has resulted in fewer jobs, increased layoffs, and pay cuts. House prices are showing weakness and some analysts are predicting further declines or corrections. Income growth is also slowing down.

The Jamat can take proactive steps to steady itself and take advantage of opportunities that may arise such as:

- Continuing to educate and upgrade skills to increase your value to your employer or customer, regardless of age;
- Proactively build and strengthen relationships, both within your company and within the Jamat;
- Look at vocational training opportunities in both technical and non-technical areas.
- Businesses can take advantage of increased government spending in the areas of schools, hospitals and infrastructure;
- Non-oil and gas industries such as transportation, manufacturing, tourism and export-focused industries, such as agriculture, are expected to show growth over the next few years.
- For Jamati members who may be unemployed and for those who may have short-term severance payouts, consider taking contract

positions and other employment sooner as fewer jobs are becoming available and more people are seeking employment;

- Members of the Jamat who become aware of a job posting or who are seeking a job are requested to inform the skills and employment office.

The current situation will also provide new investment and business opportunities. The Jamat is encouraged to carry out proper due diligence before investing; think long term; and seek legal advice on proper documentation and partnership agreements

The recent Alberta and anticipated federal budgets will reduce taxes for low and middle income families. The budgets also offer financial incentives for families with children, small businesses and employers. Those with higher incomes should plan for tax increases.

The Jamat should live prudently, responsibly and within its means. With proper planning and a careful approach to finances, the Jamat will navigate well through this economic condition.

The Council for Canada will continue to update the Jamat on the state of the economy and is also planning interactive panel sessions related to economic matters.

We encourage the Jamat to contact members of the Economic Planning Board for assistance, and to take advantage of services such as Skills and Employment, Financial Literacy, Entrepreneurship and the Ismaili Business and Professionals Association.