BALANCED MIGRATION

"TURNING POINT" IN IMMIGRATION DEBATE

18 October 2008

Cross Party Group on Balanced Migration welcomes Government's change of approach

Commenting on the interview in *The Times* by the Immigration Minister Phil Woolas MP, the co-Chairmen of the Cross Party Group on Balanced Migration, Frank Field MP and Nicholas Soames MP, said:

“This is a turning point in the whole debate on immigration. For the first time, a Minister is accepting what the overwhelming majority of voters of all races and voters of all political views believe: that the population should not be grown by immigration - it is unacceptable for immigration to add seven million to England’s population by 2031. We are delighted by this major change in policy, which also makes a great deal of sense as the economy slows down.

“What matters now is delivery. If our population is to be stabilised, immigration must be substantially reduced. This will require a whole range of measures. For a start, we need to end the virtually automatic right of those who come on work permits to settle permanently in Britain. This is a major plank in our proposal for Balanced Migration.

"Will the Government make a serious effort to bring down the scale of immigration? That is the question Ministers now need to answer."

Attached is a paper, prepared by Migrationwatch UK at the request of the Cross Party Group, which explains the long term impact of an economic slowdown on levels of immigration.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The Rt Hon Frank Field MP and The Hon Nicholas Soames MP are Co-Chairmen of the Cross Party Group on Balanced Migration. The Group's Vice-Chairmen are Lord (Bill) Jordan CBE (former President of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union) and Daniel Kawczynski MP (Conservative, Shrewsbury & Atcham). Other members include Tobias Ellwood MP, Roger Godsiff MP, David Taylor MP, Lord Ahmed, Lord Carey (former Archbishop of Canterbury) Baroness Cox, Field Marshal Lord Inge KG, GCB, PC, DL and Lord Skidelsky.

2. According to the Government's statistics:

- Immigration will add 7 million to our population by 2031, equivalent to adding seven cities the size of Birmingham.
- In 2009, England is expected to become the most crowded country in Europe, overtaking Holland.
- For the next 20 years we will have to build a house every six minutes for new immigrants.
- The annual benefit of immigration, on the Government's own calculation, is 62 pence per head, per week.

3. The House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs issued a groundbreaking report on the economic impact of immigration in April which called for "a reasoned indicative target range for net immigration" around which policies should be adjusted. The Cross Party Group believes that this indicative target should be Balanced Migration.

4. Balanced Migration would seek to bring the number of immigrants into line with the number of emigrants. The main change would be to limit the number of non-EU citizens who are given the right to settle permanently in the UK. Under these proposals, there would be no fundamental change to arrangements governing asylum; foreign students coming to the UK; or genuine marriages. The new Points Based System would need some modification. Essentially, non-EU citizens would be able to work here for up to four years, after which they would be expected to leave; permanent settlement would be subject to a small annual limit with applicants selected by a further points system. Balanced Migration, once achieved, would mean that new household formation would be reduced by about a third, and the population of England, now nearly 51 million, would stabilise at about 56 million by mid century; by contrast, at present levels of immigration it would by then be 66 million and still rising sharply.

5. "Balanced Migration – A new approach to controlling immigration" is available to download at www.frankfield.co.uk and www.nicholassoames.org.uk.

6. Phil Woolas MP's interview with *The Times* can be found here:
http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article4965568.ece