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Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Économiques
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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English/French

COUNCIL

Meeting of the Council at Ministerial Level, 29-30 May 2013

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL STATEMENT

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“It’s all about people: Jobs, Equality and Trust”

1. On the occasion of the 2013 OECD Ministerial Council Meeting, we* have assembled under the Chairmanship of Norway and the Vice-Chairmanship of Australia and Estonia.
2. Over five years into the most severe economic crisis of our lifetimes, the recovery continues to face a number of challenges in our countries and the social consequences are grave. Our common goal remains to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth acknowledging the need for structural reforms and taking into account social aspects in our countries, notably the urgency to reduce unemployment, address inequalities and rebuild trust. We will act together, and with the assistance of the OECD, to put our economies on the path to a strong, sustainable and balanced recovery. We welcome the initial steps taken in developing the New Approaches to Economic Challenges initiative (NAEC), and look forward to substantive progress, including targeted policy proposals, to be presented at our next meeting in 2014. We welcome the role of the Secretary-General in proposing new initiatives, including in his Strategic Orientations for OECD for 2013 and beyond.
3. Unemployment is the biggest challenge in many of our countries. We underline the importance of social dialogue and strengthening the social policy response to the crisis. As the crisis has hit youth particularly hard, we commit today to an OECD Action Plan for Youth. Labour market activation strategies, including for SMEs, are needed to help people into work. In addition, ensuring people have the right skills is important for employability, and we look forward to the Skills Outlook and the first OECD analysis of Adult skills (PIAAC-study) to be launched this coming October. We also recognise the need for greater inclusion of all parts of our populations, including migrants, in labour markets.
4. We recognise the importance of addressing inequalities in our societies, including its implications for economic growth. Key to this is providing equal access to opportunities and appropriate social protection systems. We adopt the OECD Council Recommendation on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship, and commit to deliver progress on gender equality. We, furthermore, encourage the OECD to strengthen its work on inequalities under the NAEC initiative.
5. We reaffirm our commitment to rebuilding trust in governments, markets and institutions, strengthening financial regulation, combating corruption, promoting open government, and ensuring transparency in policy making. We welcome the forward looking agenda of the OECD in this regard.
6. We welcome the OECD’s analysis and advice in the field of new innovative sources of growth, notably knowledge-based capital and green growth, to better sustain and create high-quality jobs in our countries.
7. We underscore the importance of effective, efficient, fair and transparent tax systems. We are committed to countering the erosion of tax bases and also avoiding the risk of double non-taxation. We adopt a Declaration in support of OECDs important work on “Base Erosion and Profit Shifting” – together with Argentina, Brazil, Indonesia, the Russian Federation and South Africa. We encourage all jurisdictions to join the multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters. We call on all jurisdictions to move towards automatic exchange of information and to improve the availability, the quality and the accuracy of information on beneficial ownership, in order to effectively act against tax fraud and evasion.

* Ministers and Representatives of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.

8. We reaffirm our commitment to a rules-based, open trading and investment system, expanding markets and resisting protectionism in all its forms, which is necessary for sustained global economic recovery, jobs and development. We underscore our commitment to achieving significant and substantive outcomes at the 9th WTO Ministerial Meeting later this year so as to create momentum towards concluding the World Trade Organization (WTO) Doha Round negotiations. We share the objective that the Bali package should encompass a trade facilitation agreement and agreement on some elements of agriculture and development, including issues of interest to Least Developed Countries. We note that these negotiations are, as yet, not on a path that provides confidence of success and we call on all WTO Members to work with flexibility and realism to achieve this goal.

9. We welcome OECD's work on Global Value Chains (GVC) and on measuring Trade in Value Added terms. GVCs are a powerful driver of growth and productivity and support job creation. We note that trade facilitation measures would better allow both developed and developing countries to take advantage of GVCs. Services are key to the efficient operation of GVCs, giving services liberalisation greater importance. We look forward to the results of OECD's work on services trade restrictiveness, to be presented at the 2014 MCM. We call on the OECD to do further analysis of the relationship between GVCs and jobs and income as well as how to make GVCs accessible to all.

10. We welcome the progress that has taken place since we endorsed the Development Strategy in strengthening and mainstreaming development aspects into the work of the Organisation. We welcome the OECD's efforts to ensure, through its multidisciplinary work, that broader policies contribute to equitable and sustainable economic development in the world, recognising the importance of coherence for development as a global challenge. We look forward to the upcoming analyses on illicit financial flows and food security as important areas under the Strategy in the coming year, and the substantive report on the implementation of the strategy to the 2014 MCM.

11. We will continue to deepen our relations with our Key Partners (Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa), and welcome the Framework Agreement signed with Indonesia. We launch the new regional programme for South-East Asia and ask the Secretary General to report back on progress at our next meeting. We welcome the role the OECD is playing at the global and regional level, including in the context of the G8 and the G20.

12. We reiterate our desire to see the Russian Federation complete its accession in line with the terms, conditions and process set out in its Accession Roadmap.

13. We welcome the interest expressed by a number of countries to accede to the OECD; this shows the continuing relevance and impact of the Organisation's work and its importance as a global and flexible policy network. We welcome the important decision set out in the Council Resolution on Strengthening OECD's Global Reach to open accession discussions with Colombia and Latvia. We will review the situation in due course, with a view to taking a decision to open accession discussions with Costa Rica and Lithuania in 2015, and in the intervening period, we will work closely with these countries to prepare for their future accession processes. We invite the Secretary-General to inform other countries whose applications were reviewed by Council that their applications for accession shall be further considered individually.

14. We call upon the Council to carry out a review of the governance of the Organisation to meet the challenges of an enlarged OECD with a more global and diverse membership, as set out in the Council Resolution on Strengthening OECD's Global Reach.

15. Given the challenging budgetary situation for Members, we particularly welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to providing value-for-money for Members and maximising impact, while delivering efficiencies, and his commitment to open, free and accessible data.