

Preface by the Secretary-General

During my stewardship of the Organisation, the OECD has been rapidly developing its outreach and engagement with all those involved in the vital but delicate task of managing a globalising planet in a constructive and sustainable way.

As we look outwards, the problems of the poorer and weaker countries pose particular challenges in a world where the old simplistic division between developed and developing countries has lost its meaning. OECD experience is seen as highly relevant by a steadily widening group of emerging economies. It is less susceptible to simple transfer to countries where the social, political and economic situation is vastly different, and where governments struggle to meet even the most basic of the reasonable expectations of their people.

The establishment of a “Development Cluster” in the OECD in 2002 was in part an attempt to bring together the Organisation’s main assets which had a focus on these poorer and less self-sufficient economies. I want to see the Cluster and the DAC within it both work closely with the rest of the Organisation to facilitate the application and adaptation of OECD experience to these challenging environments, and to help all relevant policy communities reflect on how their activities may support, or hinder, the efforts of poor countries. This “two-way-street” will help OECD members work more smartly together on issues that affect these poorer and weaker countries.

As this report emphasises, the problems of these countries demand steady attention over the long haul. The coherence and consistency of OECD members’ policies that affect them in areas such as trade, capital flows, migration and the environment will be very important for their progress.

Much is said in this report about aid, which remains a prime policy intervention, particularly for least-developed countries and other countries which are unable to attract private finance on a large scale. A central role of the DAC is to pursue the greatest possible effectiveness of this USD 70 billion a year – and growing – enterprise. I am particularly pleased that the DAC is now working extremely closely with the international financial institutions, the UN systems and the global funds on this range of issues, and that it is embarking on a new dialogue with bilateral donors outside the DAC and even outside the OECD. As elsewhere in the Organisation, I shall be looking to see how this work can deliver real results – particularly in the transfer of widely agreed principles into measurable improvements in the delivery of aid and its impact.

The year 2005 sees the first collective international stocktaking on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. The goals are the reflection of an initiative taken in the DAC nearly ten years ago. I believe that in the debate on how to maximise progress towards their achievement, the OECD has a great deal to offer – both through the work of the Development Cluster, including the DAC, and through the contribution of many other policy communities to shaping an international framework within which poor people can improve their lives.

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Secretary-General

