

**OECD FORUM 2007**  
**Innovation, Growth and Equity**  
14-15 May 2007, Paris

**Keynote Session**

**Aart Jan de Geus**, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Aart de Geus, Deputy Secretary General of OECD. Our Secretary-General is in a meeting with Ambassadors on expanded membership this morning preparing for the ministerial council meeting that will start today at 11.00am in our head office. Angel Gurría has asked me to replace him in this Forum session.

It is a great pleasure for me to introduce today Pedro Solbes, First Vice President and Minister of Economy and Finance of Spain, who will be chairing the Ministerial meeting this year.

Spain is one of our best success stories. It has managed a remarkable performance in terms of economic growth, job creation and fiscal management over the past decade by adopting difficult but necessary policies. It still faces challenges to improve productivity and innovation, but it is clearly on the right track. There is a new Spain, one that is active in the global economy, with competitive international businesses and expanding global integration.

Spain is also one of our most enthusiastic members. It participates in a wide range of activities and makes important contributions. This time a year ago, at this very Forum, we had the Mayor of Madrid, Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón, and to discuss the possibility of a conference in Spain on the future of cities. In late March, that conference took place and was highly successful. It has launched an ongoing project with the OECD to advance our understanding of the role of cities and how they can effectively participate in the global economy. Spain clearly understands the role of the OECD and what it can do best.

On a more personal note, I am particularly pleased that Pedro Solbes is not only the chair of this year's Ministerial but the keynote speaker at this year's Forum. His Chairmanship comes at a very important juncture for the Organisation, when we are looking at very substantive issues such as an expanded membership; our position as the hub of the globalisation process; and our interest to be more and more relevant when helping our Member countries not only to identify the best policy options, but also to implement them in what we call the political economy of reform. So Pedro is well placed to help the OECD move forward in these very challenging times.

Pedro Solbes has had a remarkable career of national and international public service, one that is still filled with future promise. You played an important role in the negotiations for Spain's entry into the European Community and, in 1985, you were appointed by President Felipe González to serve as Secretary of State for Relations with the European Community. He went on to serve first as Minister of Agriculture, Food and

Fisheries, and then Minister of Economic and Financial Affairs and broadened his scope to the global world.

In 1999, you then became the European Commissioner of Economic and Monetary Affairs, where he supervised the rules underpinning the adoption of the Euro and dealt with the imminent entry of 10 new members of the European Community.

Since April of 2004, he has served as First Vice President and Minister of Economy and Finance in Spain.

Pedro, we look forward to your presentation. I can think of no one better qualified to help us understand the challenges facing the world today and what we must do to achieve our goals of innovation and growth with equity.