

DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD -EPOC BUREAU DIALOGUE WITH STAKEHOLDER PARTNERS (9 NOVEMBER 2004)

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

1. The Chair of EPOC, Mats Olsson, welcomed the participants to the stakeholder dialogue, and introduced the other members of the EPOC Bureau and the Secretariat. Representatives from the three stakeholder groups – environmental NGOs, business and industry, and trade unions – introduced their participants.

Agenda Item 2: Proposals for new work requested by Ministers

2. Helen Mountford (OECD Secretariat) introduced the new project on Costs of Policy Inaction, requested by OECD Environment Ministers when they met in April 2004. Stakeholder partners expressed appreciation at being consulted early in the process of developing the project. They raised a number of methodological challenges which will need to be considered in the work, including issues related to economic valuation, aggregation of values, etc. Representatives of **trade unions** stressed the need to identify key issues in the health area for examination, with suggestions from participants for possible case studies on POPs and PCBs, asbestos in the workplace, and chemical contamination. Representatives of **business and industry** strongly recommended broadening of the topic to look at not only the costs of inaction, but also the costs of action, to give the full picture. Emphasis should be on how to implement cost-effective policies that target priority areas. The representative of **environmental NGOs** highlighted the need to include qualitative assessments in the work, not just those with monetary values.

3. Brendan Gillespie (OECD Secretariat) introduced the new project on Effective and Efficient Partnerships, requested by OECD Environment Ministers when they met in April 2004. Stakeholder partners expressed strong interest in the project, indicating the broad range of partnerships in which they are engaged. They stressed the importance of sharing experiences with partnerships, but did not believe the work should develop specific guidelines for such partnerships and should be careful to not overlap with the CSD mandate. Representatives of **trade unions** suggested the work look at whether government policies provided incentives for or against the use of partnerships, and examine not only existing partnerships but also areas for which partnerships have not been developed (and why). Representatives of **business and industry** suggested consideration of the different competencies of different types of partners, and the need for each partner to benefit from the partnership, in order to emphasise outcomes, delivering solutions and shared rewards, and on the concrete value added in achieving the stated objectives of partnerships. The representative of **environmental NGOs** stressed the need to focus on partnerships that lead to environmental benefits beyond existing legal requirements.

Agenda Item 3: Recently completed work on environment and distributional issues

4. Jean-Philippe Barde (OECD Secretariat) introduced the main results of the recent OECD report [ENV/EPOC/WPNEP(2003)12/FINAL]. Participants engaged in a lively discussion on the topic, highlighting the complexity of the issues that needed to be addressed including direct and indirect social impacts of environmental policies, consideration of vulnerable populations, short and long-term distributional effects, etc. They argued strongly for further OECD work on the issue, including examination of mitigation or compensation measures to address distributional effects. **Trade union** representatives suggested additional case studies would be useful on the Montreal Protocol and Kyoto Protocol, as well as work on hypothecation or earmarking of environmental tax revenues and transitional measures. They suggested a case study on the social impacts of the EU REACH (Registration, Evaluation

and Authorisation of CHemicals) policy, which was supported by **business and industry** representatives but opposed by the **environmental NGO** representative.

Agenda Item 4: Outcomes of the Conference of Environment Ministers from EECCA Countries and their Partners (Tbilisi, Georgia, 21-22 October 2004)

5. Brendan Gillespie (OECD Secretariat) presented the results of the Tbilisi Conference and the OECD work supporting it. Participants discussed some of the challenges faced in working in partnerships in transition economies, including the need to ensure better governance with clear and predictable rules for investment.

Agenda Item 5: Recent work on agriculture and environment

6. Tom Jones (OECD Secretariat) presented the main conclusions of the work of the Joint Working Party on Agriculture and Environment, drawn from a summary of the lessons learned in the last 10 years. The **environmental NGO** representative stressed that, despite some improvements, the environmental impacts of agricultural policies are still not considered sufficient, and a potential food crisis may be exacerbated by falling water tables, groundwater contamination, soil loss and climate change. He doubted whether the agriculture-related national actions in the OECD Environmental Strategy would be achieved by 2010, and stressed the need to go beyond cross-compliance to integrated crop management. **Business and industry** representatives supported the work, and noted the introduction of a new BIAC Standing Expert Group on Food and Agriculture, which could provide useful input to these discussions. Representatives of **trade unions** highlighted the need to look for synergies to integrate environmental concerns in agricultural policies, and warned against ignoring the social aspects (e.g. impacts of fertilisers, pesticides and other agricultural chemicals on agricultural workers).

Agenda Item 6: Concluding comments

7. Mats Olsson concluded by noting the increasing convergence in ideas of the three different stakeholder groups and EPOC delegates on many of the issues discussed. The Bureau thanked the stakeholder participants for their insights and comments. Mats Olsson indicated that the results of the