

Executive Summary

At nearly 4 per cent projected for 2018, the annual GDP growth rate of the global economy is close to the pace of growth preceding the great recession. This period of strong and broadly-based global growth creates favourable conditions for the successful implementation of structural reforms – necessary to turn the upswing into stronger and sustainable long-term growth for all.

Amid these positive short-term developments, still underpinned by supportive fiscal and monetary policy, medium and longer-term challenges remain for policy makers. Productivity growth is still disappointing. Despite the long-awaited employment recovery, wages have so far failed to follow, and many vulnerable groups are still confronted with weak prospects in the labour market. Inequality is persistent and on a longer-term trend rise within many countries – indicating that parts of society have not benefited much from growth. On top of this, megatrends such as digitalisation, environmental pressures and demographics, may carry risks for the sustainability of long-term growth unless the policy challenges they raise are properly addressed.

Going for Growth provides policy makers with concrete reform recommendations in areas which are identified as the top five country-specific priorities in order to tackle medium-term challenges, revive productivity and employment growth, while ensuring a broad sharing of the benefits. The priorities are identified building on OECD expertise on structural policy reforms and inclusive growth. The areas covered are diverse, including product and labour market regulation, education and training, tax and transfer systems, as well as trade and investment rules, physical and legal infrastructure and innovation policies. Policy recommendations across these areas are articulated so as to form a coherent reform strategy, which is crucial to reap synergies, manage trade-offs and ensure that the benefits are broadly shared over time. As such, the *Going for Growth* framework has been instrumental in helping G20 countries make progress on their structural reform agenda, including through monitoring their growth strategies to achieve sustained and balanced growth.

This *Interim* report reviews progress on structural reforms with respect to priorities identified in *Going for Growth 2017*.

Actions taken on policy priorities

- In 2017, the pace of reforms has remained similar to the relatively slow pace observed in the last two years and below the one observed in the direct aftermath of the crisis.
- Nevertheless, some bold actions have been taken – over one third of actions implemented in 2017 can be viewed as “major steps”. Notable examples include reforms to strengthen social protection in Greece and Italy, a long-overdue reform of the labour market in France, significant measures in Japan to increase childcare

capacity, a goods and services tax in India and a comprehensive tax reform in Argentina, to be phased in over the next 5 years.

- More generally, the intensity of reforms has varied across policy areas. Among reforms to *boost skills acquisition and innovative capacity*, widespread actions were taken to increase the size and efficiency of R&D support.
- The bulk of actions taken to *promote business dynamism and knowledge diffusion* have focused on strengthening physical and legal infrastructure as well as on making product market regulation more competition-friendly.
- Significant actions have been taken in the area of social benefits, which is important for social cohesion. To further *help workers to cope with potentially rapid changes in jobs and tasks*, more reforms are needed in complementary areas, such as improving active labour market and housing market policies to facilitate the job-market transition and mobility.

Special chapters – reviewing indicators to enrich the *Going for Growth* analysis

This report includes two special chapters that review indicators for extending the scope of the *Going for Growth* framework: green growth indicators and OECD indicators of insolvency regimes.

The links between green and growth: what the indicators reveal

The ability to sustain long-term improvements in GDP and well-being, as advocated in *Going for Growth*, depends – among other things - on the ability to reduce negative effects (such as pollution) associated with economic activity, minimise environment-related risks and lower the reliance on (limited) natural capital resources. Hence, a more systematic approach to environment-related challenges in *Going for Growth* is warranted. At the same time, the links between the environment, environmental policies and economic growth are complex. In that regard, Chapter 2 reviews the indicators available and the recent progress made on the measurement of environmental outcomes and policies. While no single broadly-accepted measure of environmental performance exists, significant progress has been made in the measurement of green growth, notably as part of the OECD Green Growth Indicators, paving the way for a more consistent treatment of green growth in *Going for Growth*.

Facilitating orderly exit: insights from the new OECD insolvency regimes indicators

Poorly performing insolvency regimes can be linked to three inter-related sources of labour productivity weakness: the survival of so-called “zombie” firms – that should otherwise exit the market; capital miss-allocation, i.e. the trapping of resources in low productivity uses; and stalling technological diffusion. Chapter 3 presents the newly developed OECD indicators of insolvency regimes, which will allow the extension and fine-tuning of reform recommendations on exit policies in *Going for Growth*. The analysis reveals significant cross-country differences in the extent to which insolvency regimes promote orderly exit of non-viable firms, indicating that some countries have scope to improve resource allocation and productivity through reforms of bankruptcy laws and procedures.