

## **Ministers chart future path to boosting skills for productivity, innovation and inclusion at Skills Summit 2016 in Bergen**

29-30 June 2016

26 Ministers and State Secretaries representing 15 countries and the European Commission gathered in Bergen, Norway, for the first Skills Summit on 29-30 June 2016. The Summit, hosted by Norway, was opened by Prime Minister Erna Solberg and the OECD's Secretary General, Angel Gurría.

Skills transform lives and drive economies. "The rapid and unpredictable pace of change makes it difficult to forecast what skills will be needed in the future. What we do know is that the education and skills that were good enough to enable us to compete yesterday will not be good enough tomorrow. We have to give people the opportunity to develop their education and skills throughout their lives", according to the Prime Minister of Norway,

Effective skill development and deployment have long been central to productivity, innovation and social inclusion. But a number of ongoing and emerging trends are making skills more important than ever. In all OECD countries the working-age population is now growing at a much slower rate than in the past or is already shrinking. As a consequence, productivity growth and innovation are now the primary engines of economic growth.

At the same time, global value chains and technological advances are reshaping the structure of employment and the skill requirements of jobs in the process. Many of the jobs of future do not even exist today. Countries are also struggling with social challenges, such as rising inequality and the pressure of ensuring the successful economic and social integration of migrants.

"Better skills policies can help us to overcome these challenges and transform many into opportunities", according to Angel Gurría, Secretary General at the OECD. "But despite growing recognition of the importance of skills for economic growth and social inclusion, many countries are still failing to anchor skills policies at the centre of national policy agendas and make progress on long standing skills challenges."

The Summit offered a unique opportunity for Ministers to engage in candid and open discussions about the benefits and challenges of building effective whole-of-government and whole-of-society skills strategies, as well as to exchange views on how best to maximize countries' skills potential to boost productivity, innovation and social inclusion.

At the Summit, the Secretary-General of the OECD, Angel Gurría, also launched the OECD Centre for Skills, which will support countries in developing and implementing better skills policies based on a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach by using the OECD Skills Strategy framework. The Centre's main objectives are to carry out national skills strategy projects with both member and non-member countries; to mobilise expertise across the OECD to develop useful analytical tools while promoting peer-learning among countries; and to update the OECD Skills Strategy on a regular basis.

Documentation on the Skills Summit is available at <https://skillssummit2016.no/>

For more information, journalists should contact the OECD Media Division (tel. + 33 1 45 24 97 00).