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NEW APPROACHES TO TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES

*Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort*

OECD 50th anniversary
Paris, 25 May 2011

Madame la Secrétaire d'Etat [*Clinton*],
Messieurs les Premiers Ministres [*Fillon; Kan*],
Monsieur le Secrétaire-Général [*Gurría*],
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Nous sommes ici aujourd'hui pour commémorer le remarquable travail accompli par l'OCDE au cours cinquante dernières années, et je voudrais remercier le Secrétaire-Général Gurría de nous accueillir à l'occasion de cet événement.

Je voudrais aussi remercier la France en tant que pays hôte, représentée par le Premier Ministre François Fillon, pour son engagement en faveur des objectifs et des valeurs de cette organisation, que l'Union Européenne partage elle aussi pleinement.

Les origines de l'OCDE se trouvent dans l'Europe de l'après-guerre, où son précurseur a été chargé de distribuer l'aide du Plan Marshall.

Il convient de rappeler la contribution des Etats-Unis, ici représentés par la Secrétaire d'Etat Hillary Clinton, qui ont su montrer leur solidarité avec l'Europe et qui ont aussi eu l'intelligence stratégique de promouvoir le développement économique sur les deux rives de l'Atlantique.

Depuis ses débuts, l'OCDE s'est tenue au carrefour du développement économique, de la justice sociale et des réformes démocratiques, qui sont inextricablement liés.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is precisely because of the links between democracy and social and economic development that today my first message concerns Europe's relationship with our immediate neighbourhood. We are not living in isolation and there is no progress in isolation: our future is closely linked to the future of our closest neighbours.

The need to promote development and political reforms in our neighbouring countries has perhaps never been so tangible during the last half century than in the aftermath of the recent upheavals in the Arab world. It is against this historic backdrop that we *must* stand side by side with those who aspire to a greater future of political freedom and social justice.

In short, we must show our support through actions, not just words.

The promotion of open trade, democracy and development is core to the OECD's values. It is also the guiding principle of the European Union's new response to our changing neighbourhood.

Our relationship with the 16 countries that lie to the East and the South of the European Union has never been more crucial. A new approach is needed, a 'more for more' approach.

That means engaging more and rewarding those partners who are ready to implement more far-reaching political and economic reforms.

The EU is already by far the biggest donor and investor in its neighbourhood. We have committed 5.7 billion euros in grants for the next two years to push forward this agenda. This week the Commission has announced it will top this up with another 1.24 billion euros.

But aid alone is not the answer. Facilitating trade and investment will boost growth and jobs in our neighbour countries.

Promoting well managed mobility and people-to-people contacts is crucial to continuing the transformational agenda that the young men and young women in these countries have started.

This is what is expected from us. Not to impose models but to be ready to assist.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the last 50 years, the OECD has carved out a place for itself at the core of global architecture, through its expertise, its inclusive approach and its relentless desire to build global ties and to define action-oriented solutions. It is not only a remarkable reservoir of expertise and of economic and social information, but also a unique forum for sharing experiences and developing shared policies. In particular, the quality of the OECD's work comes from its interdisciplinary approach.

Moreover, the OECD has gained worldwide respect for demonstrating the value of multilateralism, even in the framework of the global crisis.

The presence of so many eminent personalities here today from across the globe is testament to its leadership, and to the high regard it continues to command.

But the OECD also has a great significance for the European Union. Both have grown in parallel, and the richness of our collaboration continues to bear fruit.

In turn to its unique expertise, the European Union provides the OECD with an unrivalled perspective and model of international governance.

We are happy to work hand in hand on areas that are key to our economic growth agenda as set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy, in particular innovation, climate change and green growth.

And I also recognize the very good cooperation which we have on international governance and G20 matters.

Today we are all faced with unprecedented challenges, and as Prime Minister Kan has reminded us, these challenges can be both unexpected and of overwhelming dimensions.

As set out in its vision statement, the OECD will continue to play a crucial role in promoting a stronger and fairer global economy. For economic growth is not the end game, it is a better quality of life for all our citizens.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In today's world, when a major event strikes in one country or in one part of the world, its resonance is immediately amplified across the global stage.

We need no other justification to assert that global challenges require global solutions. The European Union and OECD will continue to work together, and to play a pivotal role in defining these solutions.