
Message from the OECD Secretary-General

FUELLING THE FUTURE



I am delighted to welcome you to OECD Forum 2005, Fuelling the Future: Security, Stability, Development.

This year's event focusses on issues of the highest priority: development and energy challenges, and ensuring the benefits of globalisation are accessible to all.

Economic growth, fuelled by international trade and investment and founded on sound domestic policies, has helped to lift millions of people out of poverty in recent years, particularly in East Asia. As a result, the UN Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of people, globally, living on less than one dollar a day by 2015, is likely to be met. But progress has been slow in many countries and regions, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Development in too many countries is being impeded by conflict, instability and insecurity.

Energy-related issues represent one of the biggest challenges facing the world in the 21st century. On the one hand, we know that global energy demand is rising dramatically, especially in developing countries. A massive investment of some 16 trillion dollars is needed to ensure secure and stable supplies to meet what the IEA forecasts will be a 60% increase in primary energy demand between 2002 and 2030. At the same time, many scientists tell us that greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, especially CO₂, are approaching a threshold beyond which global warming will be irreversible. Clearly, in addition to putting in place adaptation policies to deal with climate change, we need to find a way of meeting our energy needs while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Globalisation offers great opportunities, but all our economies and citizens need to adapt so we can realise its full potential. The OECD has the task of helping to "shape globalisation", to ensure that its benefits are maximised and its negative impacts minimised. The "winners" under globalisation must outnumber any "losers", and be seen to do so by the electorates in our democratic societies. This requires both effective

policies and communication: one to explain clearly and honestly the implications of trade and investment liberalisation; and the other by putting in place effective adjustment measures for those workers who are displaced. The OECD is helping governments design such policies. In doing so, it is important to recall the words of the Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, some 2,500 years ago: "nothing is permanent but change".

The discussions at OECD Forum 2005 will address these and other issues of concern to citizens in all our countries. The Forum provides an excellent opportunity for business and labour leaders, civil society organisations, government ministers and leaders of international organisations to discuss these important matters, which are also on the agenda of the OECD Ministerial Meeting this same week.

I very much hope that you will find the Forum both stimulating and informative, and that it will offer new policy insights for our governments and societies.

Donald J. JOHNSTON