

The 4th OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy

New Delhi, 16-19 October, 2012

Statement

The 4th OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, met in New Delhi from 16th October, 2012 to 19th October, 2012 and held in depth discussions on measuring well-being and the progress of societies.

The world is now five years into the global economic and financial crisis. At a time when governments are struggling to address short-term macro-economic challenges and are designing strategies to restore long-term growth prospects, citizens worldwide are calling for an economy that guarantees a better life for themselves and a better future for their children.

People in developed and developing countries alike aspire to a society that allows them to thrive and prosper, a society that is more inclusive and that secures, rather than undermines, opportunities for future generations to live a good life. People are concerned about their living conditions and reducing poverty still remains an imperative in many countries. But beyond material conditions, people are also concerned about the quality of their life: their jobs and working conditions, their health and skills, the time they devote to their families and friends, their ties with other people in their community, their capacity to act as informed citizens, the quality and security of the environment where they live. They are concerned about the sustainability of natural resources, and have expectations for better governance and more responsive institutions.

This requires a new vision that places the imperative of fostering economic growth within the broader context of societal progress. The notions of well-being and progress thereof are universal and relevant to everyone, everywhere, notwithstanding different cultures, contexts, and levels of economic and social development. Well-being is about meeting people's needs, and enhancing their abilities to pursue their own goals, to thrive and feel satisfied.

For more than ten years the OECD has been at the forefront of a movement to rethink the way policy-makers and societies at large should define and measure individual and social well-being. More recently, it has developed a conceptual framework that distinguishes between current well-being and its sustainability. According to this framework based on the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report, current well-being encompasses material conditions and quality of life and includes eleven dimensions that are universal (income and wealth; jobs and earnings; housing; health; work-life balance; education and skills; social connections; civic engagement and governance; environmental quality; personal security and subjective well-being), while sustainability is assessed in terms of the preservation of economic, human, social and environmental assets.

As the world moves from Rio+20 towards the post-2015 development agenda, the 4th OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy held in New-Delhi on 16-19 October 2012 has allowed us to further discuss what makes for a good life independently of where we live, and how all of us – policy-makers, businesses, citizens alike – can work together to ensure that we do not focus our actions solely on the bottom line of higher economic production but also consider the quality of that growth, and how to contribute to equity and sustainability throughout society. To achieve these goals it is vital that the relevant things are measured and the link between measurement and policy is strengthened in order to design and implement the right policies. The drive towards better well-being measures will not be successful unless we show that these measures can lead to better policies.

The Forum:

- **Thanks** the Governments of Mexico, Japan and Morocco, and the European eFrame coordinators for hosting the conferences held in preparation for this Forum, and the many institutions that have contributed to the organisation of these regional events.
- **Recognises** the urgent need to measure what matters the most to people and to use this information to make more informed policy decisions, to develop appropriate implementation mechanisms and to better monitor outcomes. This agenda is equally important for developed, emerging and developing countries. It should result in the regular use of progress indicators for monitoring developments and policies in different regions of the world. A strengthened link between statistics, knowledge and policy requires engagement from civil society, the business community, statisticians, academics, and politicians.
- **Welcomes** the initiatives taken since the 3rd OECD World Forum, held in Busan, Korea, in 2009. This includes the launch of the *OECD Better Life Initiative* and the many regional, national and local actions undertaken to develop better metrics of well-being and progress. It also includes the call by the Rio+20 outcome document to develop measures complementing GDP, and that by UN Resolution 65/309 to place the notions of happiness and well-being at the heart of development policies
- **Acknowledges** that a number of barriers still exist which are slowing the momentum of this agenda, including the still limited experience in using measures of what matters to people in policy design and implementation and gaps in official data sources, and limitations on the budgets of some national statistical offices.

The OECD is committed to promote better well-being measures. Working in collaboration with other international organisations, UN regional agencies, regional development banks and national statistical agencies, the OECD will pursue together this measurement agenda for development and policy making. In doing so, the OECD will contribute to informing the UN-led discussions on the post-2015 development agenda with suggestions for a holistic approach to development that is relevant to a broad constituency of countries and that allows flexibility in goal setting and greater country ownership.

The OECD will continue to lead the international work on developing better well-being metrics, including in the areas of subjective well-being, governance, inequality and sustainability. It will actively pursue its engagement with civil society through its wikiprogress platform and *Better Life Index*. It will work with governments, in the context of the OECD Development Strategy, on how to apply a multi-dimensional approach to well-being to inform policies across departments and at different geographical levels (international, national and local). Particular attention will be paid to how to leverage synergies and deal with trade-offs. Taking into account individual countries' needs, capacities and aspirations, this work will promote the use of well-being indicators to design policy targets and actions and to monitor their implementation.

India has accumulated vast and valuable experience in development of statistical system and knowledge which can be shared with others in the development of better measures of well-being and progress of societies. India welcomes the initiative to develop methodologies and indicators to measure and promote social development. It is interested in the notion of "progress" in the context of highly heterogeneous societies; it will focus on development of statistical measures of progress which are consistent with the societal objectives and can be used in analytically meaningful ways.

The 5th OECD World Forum will be held in 2015, aligning with the post-2015 development agenda.

The Forum thanks the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, Government of India, for making excellent arrangements for holding the 4th OECD World Forum and extending warm hospitality to all the delegates, guests and participants.