This aide-memoire is submitted for information at the meeting of the Working Party on the Guidelines on 13 December 2000.

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THE OECD GUIDELINES FOR MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES

AIDE-MEMOIRE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ADHERING COUNTRIES

1. At its meeting on 20-21 September 2000, the Working Party on the Guidelines held a discussion on developments in Adhering countries since the adoption of the revised Guidelines by Ministers in June 2000. This aide-memoire provides an informal summary of the discussion, prepared under the Secretariat’s responsibility.

2. The “tour de table” provided an opportunity for delegations to present to the Working Party the work accomplished in their respective countries following the adoption at the June Ministerial meeting of the revised Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the improved implementation procedures. It was agreed that further developments would be discussed at the December meeting of the Working Party.

1. Institutional Arrangements

   a) Setting up National Contact Points

3. National Contact Points already existed in Adhering countries, but the adoption of the improved implementation procedures offered an opportunity for reviving and restructuring them. In view of the short time since the June Ministerial meeting, restructuring of National Contact Points is still under consideration in several Adhering countries. However, much has already been achieved.

4. Within national administrations, National Contact Points are either interagency committees or situated in one Ministry. Departments which house National Contact Points are often the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Ministries of Economy, the Ministries of Trade, Finance and/or Industry, the Ministries of Labour, or the Foreign Investment Agencies. Even where the National Contact Point is located in a single Ministry, it is expected to work in co-operation with other Ministries and Departments.

5. The role of National Contact Points is described in part in the Council Decision and the procedural guidance. However, some National Contact Points have put in place a service charter to define their functions more precisely. Other National Contact Points have as their objectives not only the dissemination of the Guidelines and the discussion of possible problems on matters covered by the Guidelines, but also plan to act more generally as a forum for discussion on globalisation issues.

   b) Composition of National Contact Points

6. In most countries, National Contact Points function as government offices. In other cases, National Contact Points function on a tripartite basis, with representatives from the government, the business community and employee organisations. Even where National Contact Points are established as government offices, their work is carried out in co-operation with business and employee representatives.

7. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are also sometimes associated with the work of National Contact Points, whether on a regular or ad hoc basis.
8. Certain National Contact Points have also made arrangements to call on an advisory body composed of experts when dealing with specific instances.

2. Information and Promotion

a) Making the Guidelines Available

9. A large majority of Adhering countries have provided on-line information, either in the form of a separate Internet site or on a webpage on their Ministry’s website. These websites generally provide the text of the Guidelines and the implementation procedure, as well as contact details for the National Contact Point and a link to the OECD website.

10. The Guidelines have also been translated in most languages of the Adhering countries. Besides the official English and French versions, the Guidelines now also exist in Czech, Finnish, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Swedish and Turkish. Translations are also underway in Dutch, Greek, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish. These versions of the Guidelines in national languages have also been posted on the websites of National Contact Points.

b) Contacts with Social Partners and NGOs

11. Contacts and activities have been undertaken by National Contact Points to raise awareness of the Guidelines with representatives of the business community, employee organisations and other non-governmental organisations.

12. Consultations have been held with national business associations as well as individual companies to inform them about the revised Guidelines. The text and implementation procedures of the Guidelines have been distributed, and seminars organised in cooperation with business.

13. Employee organisations have also been widely consulted to inform them of the revised Guidelines and receive their input. There also, the Guidelines have been distributed and, in one case, a questionnaire has been sent out to trade unions to enquire whether there were any existing problems covered by the Guidelines with the multinational enterprises operating in that country.

14. Finally, NGOs have been contacted in a number of countries to inform them of the Guidelines and the implementation procedures.

c) Further Information and Promotion Activities

15. In addition to the translation of the Guidelines in national languages, the setting-up of websites, and contacts with social partners and NGOs, many National Contact Points also plan to hold seminars. In the first instance, these seminars would concern the Guidelines in general but, further on, seminars could be held on specific subjects of particular interest such as bribery, human rights or the supply chain.

16. Furthermore, National Contact Points often work in close cooperation with investment promotion agencies, providing information on the Guidelines to potential investors.

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1 The OECD website includes the contact details for all National Contact Points:
www.oecd.org/daf/investment/guidelines/ncp.htm
17. Many National Contact Points have also planned to further knowledge of the Guidelines by making available user-friendly information on the workings of the Guidelines and National Contact Points, in their national language. In this respect, delegations welcomed the draft National Contact Point Information Booklet presented by the United-Kingdom [DAFFE/IME/WPG/RD(2000)29].

18. In conformity with their national legislation, several Adhering countries have also informed their Parliament on the Guidelines and provided them with briefings and further information on the Guidelines text and implementation procedures.

19. Finally, information on the Guidelines will be provided to associations from the legal profession and universities, at their request. One National Contact Point also reported on contacts with the national curriculum council in order to include the Guidelines in the program of business ethics courses.

3. Implementation in Specific Instances

20. Specific instances had been raised with National Contact Points in only a few countries.