INFORMAL WORKSHOP ON POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES,
COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL
STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: TOWARDS
CONVERGENCE

PARIS, 28-29 NOVEMBER 2000

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To the Heads of Delegations represented on the Development Assistance Committee

Madam, Sir,

Informal Workshop on Poverty Reduction Strategies, Comprehensive Development Framework and National Strategies for Sustainable Development: Towards Convergence

Paris, 28-29 November 2000

The OECD/DAC Strategy document, *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation* (1996), sets a target date of 2005 for national strategies for sustainable development (nssds) to be “in the process of implementation in every country”. This is one of the seven international development goals. DAC Members are also committed to supporting developing countries in the formulation and implementation of nssds. In 1997, the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) set a target date of 2002 for all countries to introduce the strategies.

National strategies for sustainable development are intended to provide a participatory process for integrating economic, social and environmental priorities. They aspire to common principles of strategic planning for sustainable development. However, processes which incorporate some of these principles are already at work in low-income countries through existing country-level frameworks, such as “National Visions”, Agenda 21, the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and now the Poverty Reduction Strategies.

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1. A note endorsed by the DAC High Level Meeting in May 1999 [DCD/DAC(99)11] offers the following definition of an nssd: “a strategic and participatory process of analysis, debate, capacity strengthening, planning and action towards sustainable development”.

2. The subject of country-level frameworks was discussed at the DAC High Level meeting on 11-12 May 2000 where delegates welcomed “convergence within the international community around comprehensive country-level development frameworks integrating national anti-poverty strategies” [PAC/COM/NEWS(2000)44].
There is now broad agreement on the need for an holistic approach to development and partnerships among governments, donors, civil society, the private sector, and other development actors. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) which were also endorsed by the IMF/World Bank in 1999 emphasise that strategies “should be country-driven, be developed transparently with broad participation of elected institutions, stakeholders including civil society, key donors and regional development banks, and have a clear link with the agreed international development goals - principles that are embedded in the CDF”.\(^3\) The “National Visions” being developed by some countries further illustrate this convergence of approach.

Country-level frameworks such as the CDF and the Poverty Reduction Strategy offer a significant opportunity to put into practice common principles of strategic planning for sustainable development. However, the achievement of the international development goal relating to \textit{nssds} will also require concerted national and international efforts to ensure convergence between different country-level frameworks, adherence to their stated principles and the integration of poverty reduction and sustainable development goals.

In line with the DAC’s role in fostering collaboration among development co-operation actors, it is proposed to organise an informal DAC workshop to explore these issues on 28-29 November 2000 in Paris. Under the chairmanship of the DAC Chairman, the workshop would provide the opportunity for members of the Poverty Reduction Network and Working Party on Development Co-operation and Environment, officials from the Bretton Woods Institutions and the UN and developing country experts to contribute to the shaping of effective approaches to poverty reduction and sustainable development. The workshop would also provide input to the finalisation of DAC guidance on poverty reduction and on \textit{nssds}, to be submitted for endorsement to the DAC High Level Meeting in 2001. Further details on this workshop will be provided in due course together with a draft agenda.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Carey
Acting Director

\(^3\) Development Committee Communiqué, 27 September 1999.