The OECD and Dubai will jointly host an international conference on electronic commerce in Dubai on 15-17 January 2001. The conference is part of the on-going work at the OECD to help governments and the private sector create a favourable and coherent environment for global e-commerce. **The entire meeting is open to journalists.**

The Emerging Market Economy Forum on Electronic Commerce will be the first event of its kind to be organised by the OECD in the Middle East. The location reflects the desire of OECD countries to work with other countries to assist them derive maximum advantage from the opportunities offered by e-commerce.

Currently, the vast majority of transactions over the Internet involve customers and suppliers in OECD countries. In the future, however, e-commerce is expected to provide major opportunities for developing countries as well. Members of the Dot Force, which was set up by the leaders of the Group of Eight industrial countries at their summit meeting in Okinawa last summer to consider ways of bridging the digital divide between and within nations, have been invited to the Dubai conference as observers.

Conference participants will review developments in a number of areas relevant to electronic commerce, including security, privacy, content, taxation, pricing, standards and intellectual property rights. The OECD provides a forum for discussion between governments in all of these areas. There will be a number of briefings for the media during the course of the conference, covering such themes as regulatory reform in the telecommunications sector, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in e-commerce, the taxation of e-commerce and ways of bridging the digital divide. The conference will not produce any official recommendations, as participants will be present in a personal capacity and not as government representatives. But it will serve to clarify the issues and establish where there is a consensus as to how world wide co-ordination in these areas can be advanced. Previous OECD conferences on electronic commerce have taken place in Turku, Finland (1997), Ottawa (1998) and Paris (1999).

For further information and to register to attend the conference, journalists are invited to consult the OECD’s website on http://www.oecd.org/dstl/sti/it/ec/act/dubai_ec/ or to contact Meggan Dissly in the OECD’s Media Relations Division (tel. 33 1 45 24 80 94; fax 33 1 45 24 80 03; e-mail: meggan.dissly@oecd.org).