PAC/COM/NEWS(2001)36

Paris, 20 April 2001

Development Assistance Committee High Level Meeting
Paris, 25-26 April

Development co-operation ministers and agency heads will gather for the High Level Meeting of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)1 on 25-26 April to discuss poverty reduction and the coherence of their policies impacting on developing countries. New figures, to be released on Monday 23 April, show that overall ODA fell slightly last year although a majority of DAC members increased their aid volume.

The Chairman of the Development Assistance Committee, Mr. Jean-Claude Faure, will hold a news conference at 3 p.m. on Thursday 26 April to inform journalists about the outcome of the DAC High Level Meeting and to outline the new ODA figures.

It is more important than ever that donors adopt coherent national and international policies if they hope to reach the International Development Goals, notably the goal of halving the proportion of people living in poverty by 20152. Continued support for country-led development strategies including through harmonisation of donor practices and clearer accountability of donor performance will be necessary. Participants to the DAC High Level Meeting will discuss the complex challenges of reducing poverty which are underlined by a range of current issues of wide concern such as violent conflict, illegal migration, the digital divide and pharmaceutical pricing.

Addressing this wide-ranging agenda will require mutually coherent and reinforcing action within and across government departments and agencies as well as society at large (including the business community, non-governmental and other civil society organisations). The DAC has prepared guidelines to assist donors as they seek to make their policies more effective, in four important areas.

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1 The 23 Members of the Committee are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Commission of the European Communities. The other OECD countries have been invited to participate as observers.

2 Progress towards the International Development Goals is being monitored in the publication A Better World for All which was jointly issued by OECD, UN, IMF, World Bank (www.paris21.org/betterworld).
The Poverty Reduction Guidelines will help DAC Members to strengthen their programmes and capacities for working collaboratively with developing country partners and other stakeholders (multilateral organisations, NGOs, the private sector, etc.) to reduce inequality and empower the poor. The Guidelines include an illustrative checklist on policy coherence for poverty reduction to encourage and assist efforts by OECD countries to improve consistency and exploit synergies across the range of their policies that impact on development progress.

The widespread recurrence of violent conflict and its ruinous impact demand that donors renew their commitment to building peace. Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation promote a culture of coherent conflict prevention in all aid policies - trade, finance, foreign affairs, and defence. Meeting participants will also discuss what strategies and instruments are effective in approaching the problems of co-operation with developing countries whose citizens are suffering under regimes with severe governance problems.

Trade is essential to dynamic and sustainable development. New DAC Guidelines on Capacity Development for Trade will help to shape co-operation with partner countries for building trade capacities and participating effectively in the institutions that shape the global economy.

Achieving sustainable development in partner countries, where there has been much recent deterioration of the soil, water and biodiversity, is crucial. The DAC Guidelines on Sustainable Development Strategies acknowledge that this will require deep structural changes in the economy, society and politics and urges the international community to work coherently to eliminate poverty through sustainable development.

The High Level Meeting will also seek to adopt a Recommendation on the Untying of Aid to Least Developed Countries.

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