Environment Ministers from the 30 OECD countries will meet in Paris on 16 May 2001 to discuss and adopt the “OECD Environmental Strategy for the First Decade of the 21st Century” to underscore their commitment to taking the steps needed to alleviate further environmental degradation.

There will be a briefing for journalists about the OECD Environmental Strategy at 12:00 noon on Wednesday 16 May at OECD headquarters. French Minister for the Environment Dominique Voynet, who will chair the ministerial discussions, will hold a news conference at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday 16 May at OECD Headquarters.

The Strategy outlines specific, time-bound targets to achieve five main policy objectives in relation to the principal environmental challenges facing OECD countries over the next two decades. Its main focus is on ensuring that continued economic growth is not accompanied by continued damage to the environment.

The Strategy will help OECD Ministers to address such pressing environmental problems as climate change, loss of biodiversity, over-fishing, groundwater pollution, pollution-related health effects, worsening urban air quality, and the overuse of “renewable” resources.

Ministers will focus their discussion on why we need to alleviate unsustainable pressures on natural resources necessary to our life support systems; how we can achieve this through a combination of appropriate policies; and where we should act first, with transport and energy among the specific sectors needing immediate attention.

The endorsement of the OECD Guidelines for Environmentally Sustainable Transport and a set of Key Environmental Indicators designed to assist in evaluating the main environmental trends are also on the Agenda.

The day will start with a Ministerial Conference with Stakeholders during which representatives from business, trade unions and environmental civil society will share their views with Ministers. A working lunch will help to position the OECD Environmental Strategy in a global context, focussing on the synergies in the messages emerging from it and the Environment Strategy being developed by the World Bank.

For further information on the Ministerial, journalists should contact Helen Fisher, OECD Media Relations Division (tel. 33 1 45 24 80 97 or helen.fisher@oecd.org). For accreditation, please contact news.contact@oecd.org or tel. 33 1 45 24 97 00.

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