OECD countries appoint Ángel Gurría as next Secretary-General from June 2006

The OECD’s 30 member countries announced the appointment of Ángel Gurría, former Foreign Minister and successively Finance Minister of Mexico, as Secretary-General of the Organisation from 1 June 2006, in succession to Donald J. Johnston, who is retiring.

Mr. Gurría, who is 55, was one of six candidates for the post. An economist with a distinguished career in public service, he served as Mexico’s Minister of Foreign Affairs from December 1994 to January 1998 and as Minister of Finance and Public Credit from January 1998 to December 2000. He currently acts as adviser or board member for a number of private companies, multilateral institutions and non-profit associations focusing on development, international finance and globalisation.

As a member of the team that negotiated Mexico’s admission to the OECD in 1994 and subsequently as a government minister, Mr. Gurría developed close relations with the OECD, overseeing the initial years of Mexico’s membership of the Organisation. In 1999, he chaired the OECD’s annual Ministerial Council Meeting; at his initiative, a number of developing countries were invited for the first time to participate at this meeting in a dialogue with OECD countries on relevant policy issues.

As Secretary-General he will oversee the work of the OECD’s Secretariat, whose staff of 2,000 economists, lawyers and others assist governments in tracking and addressing issues relating to national economies and the global economic environment. The Secretary-General also chairs the OECD’s decision-making Council, providing the link between national delegations and the Secretariat.

Mr. Johnston, a former Canadian government minister, announced earlier this year that he would retire in May 2006, after 10 years in the post. During his tenure, the OECD enlarged its membership to include new members in Europe and Asia and engaged in a programme of reform, streamlining its management systems and extending the scope of its work in important areas including education, health policy and taxation.

One of the principal tasks facing Mr. Gurría, as his successor, will be to lead the Organisation as it strengthens its activities against a background of increased economic interdependence both among OECD countries and between OECD and non-OECD countries.