Major world economies aim for "green growth" as the way out of the crisis

The world’s main economies are looking to “green growth” as the way forward out of the current crisis, opening up new prospects for climate-change negotiations ahead of the 15th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15) in Copenhagen in December.

Ministers from 40 countries, representing 80% of the world economy, discussed the crisis and where next at the OECD’s annual ministerial meeting in Paris. Participants included the 30 OECD member countries plus five countries that are candidates for membership, Chile, Estonia, Israel, Russia and Slovenia, and five major economies with which the OECD has a policy of ‘enhanced engagement’ -- Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa.

In a Declaration on Green Growth signed by all 30 OECD countries plus Chile, Estonia, Israel and Slovenia, ministers tasked the OECD with developing a Green Growth Strategy bringing together economic, environmental, technological, financial and development aspects into a comprehensive framework. A first report will be delivered to the OECD’s next Ministerial Council Meeting in 2010.

“We are talking about a paradigm shift in policy,” said Korean Prime Minister Han Seung-Soo, who chaired the meeting. “Technological development and actions to protect the environment and combat climate change can also be harnessed in favour of economic growth.”

The OECD will provide the cross-cutting policy expertise needed to support governments in addressing these challenges, OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said.

“Looking beyond the crisis, OECD countries and countries that we hope will shortly swell our numbers have made a solemn pledge to promote environmentally friendly green growth policies in favour of sustainable economic growth based on low carbon energy use,” he told a closing news conference.

“We have recognised the importance of well-targeted policy instruments encouraging green investment to contribute to both short-term economic recovery and long-term green infrastructure. This is a significant signal and staging post on the road to what we hope will be an ambitious agreement on climate change in Copenhagen at the end of the year.
The Declaration called for co-operation among OECD countries and with emerging economies and developing countries to reach “an ambitious, effective, efficient, comprehensive and fair international climate agreement” at the COP 15 meeting.

In a separate statement on the conclusions of the two-day OECD ministerial meeting, participants committed to resist pressures for trade and investment protectionism and to promote integrity and transparency in international business dealings.

They also pledged to maintain emergency support measures for national economies as long as these are needed, and to proceed cautiously in unwinding them once recovery is assured.

Noting the heavy pressure put on public budgets by the cost of financing emergency support measures, they promised to rein in debt once their economies recover. “Just as we adjusted fiscal policies expeditiously in response to the crisis, their balance should shift to a sustainable path once our economies are sufficiently strong,” they said.

To read the documents in full:

**2009 Ministerial Conclusions**

**Declaration on Green Growth**