DAC AID REVIEW OF FRANCE

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD reviewed France’s development co-operation policies and programme on 30 March 1994. The French Delegation was headed by Mr. Bertrand de Mazières, Deputy Director, Treasury Directorate, Ministry for Economic Affairs. The examining countries were Sweden and the United States.

The Chairman of the DAC, Mr. James H. Michel, summarised the main issues discussed in the review:

a) In 1992 as in previous years, France ranked third among DAC Member countries with regard to the volume of its official development assistance (ODA), its disbursements amounting to $8.3 billion in absolute terms. Expressed as a percentage of gross national product (GNP), France’s aid ranked sixth, with an ODA/GNP ratio of 0.63 per cent (DAC average: 0.33 per cent). 24 per cent of French ODA was disbursed through multilateral channels, roughly half of this being distributed through the European Union (E.U.).

b) The DAC also welcomed the fact that France had continued to concentrate half its bilateral aid on the poorest countries (DAC 1992 average: 67 per cent). Most of the recipients in this category were located in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Committee noted that the education sector still occupied first place among French ODA commitments. Given the important role of France, the DAC encouraged a greater emphasis on women in development and population (family planning in particular) in the composition and reporting of the French aid programme.

c) A thorough exchange of views took place on the recent devaluation of the CFA Franc, concerning particularly the broad range of challenges for development co-operation, in the 14 countries concerned, by France and other donors. The DAC underlined the importance, for the whole of Africa, of success of structural adjustment in these countries, and of the ongoing efforts to deepen regional integration.
d) With a view to assessing the effectiveness of France's development co-operation, the DAC reviewed the country's performance in implementing some of the "DAC Principles for Effective Aid". Progress was recognised in this area, especially as to ex post evaluation and prior appraisal of projects. The Committee expressed interest in continuing this discussion at the next Aid Review of France. It noted some ongoing reforms of the aid management, especially in the Ministries for Co-operation and for Foreign Affairs. These changes aim at streamlining procedures for executing the aid programme and improving interministerial co-ordination.

A detailed report prepared by the Secretariat and including the Committee's complete Summary and Conclusions will be published at a later date.