

FOREWORD

This new OECD publication, *Economic Policy Reforms: Going for Growth*, is designed to help policy makers as they look for ways to achieve improved standards of living for citizens. It also aims to bring the debate on the important issues of economic reforms and their consequences to a wider public. Drawing on in-depth knowledge of economic circumstances and policy objectives in individual countries, it develops a benchmarking system based on a set of policy indicators. It then proposes a number of policy priorities for each country that would help promote stronger economic growth.

Although more than 50 000 delegates register for OECD meetings each year, many of these delegates and others primarily see the Organisation's work through the prism of their own area of interest – as I know from my own personal experience as a Ministerial delegate and from the testimony of others. As such, in presenting this publication, I am aware that its scope may surprise many readers, by showing that the OECD has a wealth of experience to draw on, and conducts structural policy analysis and surveillance in its member countries in almost every area of public policy.

To do this, the OECD uses a process based on mutual accountability and peer pressure. In addition to monitoring the performance of individual countries, structural surveillance at the OECD also includes cross-country monitoring focusing on a broad range of specific fields, including work and family life, ageing and employment policies, national education systems, and regulatory reform. Naturally enough, recommendations in these various fields often reflect objectives that go beyond growth or income maximisation and relate to wider dimensions of welfare. Policy recommendations in the field of labour and social affairs, for example, need to find a balance between equity and efficiency in their policy recommendations. The surveillance processes for education tend to stress the importance of equitable access to education in addition to the goal of increasing human capital.

Different areas of government may give differing weights to the respective importance of wealth and income maximisation on the one hand and broader equity issues on the other. How these differences are resolved affects, of course, the thrust of policy priorities. In *Economic Policy Reforms*, the main objective targeted is stronger economic growth. Its underlying premise is that growth is essential to create the additional resources needed to address a number of broader social and equity concerns, and therefore is key to the search for improving standards of living for all citizens.

As policy makers and others grapple with the challenges posed by the increasing interdependence of our economies, growth has to be at the top of our agenda. I wish to acknowledge the OECD-wide contribution that has enabled this project to benefit from inputs from many parts of the Organisation, and to thank the team led by Jean-Philippe Cotis, OECD's Chief Economist, for suggesting the idea and bringing it to fruition.

A handwritten signature in black ink, written in a cursive style, that reads "Don Johnston". The signature is slanted upwards to the right.

Donald J. Johnston
OECD Secretary General