



High-Level Forum on Jobs for Youth
Addressing Policy Challenges in OECD Countries
Oslo, Norway 20-21 September 2010



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Closing Address at the Ministerial meeting

by

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Deputy Secretary-General, OECD

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Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It has been a great pleasure for me and my colleagues to work with you all to organise this ministerial meeting on Jobs for Youth. The participation of so many ministers and high-level officials from 27 countries, is a clear signal of the importance of the issues at stake -- equipping our youth with adequate skills, helping them in their transitions from school to work and laying the foundation for a good career. Their future is our future.

From our discussions today it is clear that much has been done in many countries also during the global crisis to help young people weather the storm. We have shared important lessons of different youth measures. But we have also agreed that much remains to be done: in the short run, to promote job opportunities for the many youth who are jobless and at risk of exclusion, but also in the medium to longer-run, to promote the acquisition of adequate skills, to ensure a smooth transition from school to work and to encourage skill upgrading during the working life.

We, at the OECD, stand ready to continue to work with you in addressing these major challenges. In the immediate future, we will finalise our *Jobs for Youth* report in December, and include in the report a summary of your deliberations today.

But we have also just launched a horizontal project at the OECD to develop a comprehensive *Skills Strategy: Building, Maintaining and Improving Skills*” to assist countries with improving economic and social outcomes through better skills and their effective utilisation. Work in this area will also be closely linked with the development of PIAAC – Programme for the International Assessment of Adult

Competencies. PIAAC will provide very rich information on the skills required for successful labour market outcomes and on the factors driving skill acquisition. The continuous success of PISA motivates us in this endeavour.

We all know that education matters a lot in equipping our new generations to a challenging although rewarding world of work. The OECD is organising an **Education Ministerial meeting**: it will take place on 4-5 November at the OECD Conference Centre and will provide a timely opportunity to discuss recent policy experiences in the area of education and vocational training at a high-level among OECD countries and enhanced and engaged countries.

I would like to thank again our Norwegian hosts, Ms. HANNE BJURSTRØM, Minister of Labour and Ms. KRISTIN HALVORSEN, Minister of Education for an exceptional hospitality and support in the preparation of this High-Level meeting. I would also like to thank the Norwegian officials who participated actively in the preparation of this Forum, including OLA RIBE and FINN OLA JØLSTAD, from the Ministry of Labour.