



OECD Network of Senior Officials from Centres of Government

Virtual meeting, 11 March 2021

Statement by the OECD Network of Senior Officials from Centres of Government

The 2020 OECD Ministerial Council Statement recognised the need for governments to focus on restarting hard-hit economies by boosting growth, income and employment while promoting cleaner, more inclusive and sustainable economies. Ambitious recovery plans and programmes will need to address both pre-existing and emerging challenges (e.g. climate change) and transform economies using the tools provided by new technologies. The resilience of the recovery will critically depend on the factors and processes driving policy choices and on the capacity of governments to deliver. With massive government interventions in the health, economic and social sectors, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a test case for governments' capacity to "decide better" by making the right decisions at the right time and to collaborate to address global challenges. In some cases, the pandemic has highlighted the flexibility, agility and strength of public actors and institutions; but, in others, it has exposed weaknesses as countries have struggled to respond to the speed and breadth of this global crisis. At the same time, we see emerging risks related to growing mistrust in some parts of our populations, and a need to focus on reinforcing democratic processes, including by tackling misinformation and fake news.

The OECD Network of Senior Officials from Centres of Government recognises the vital role that strong public governance and leadership will play in the recovery. With this in mind, and in line with its mandate, it will support governments in their efforts to ensure effective decision making through strategic planning, priority setting, policy co-ordination, monitoring of policy implementation and strategic communication. Members call on the OECD Secretariat to assist in this goal by capturing lessons learned from the crisis; identifying through government-led evaluations and peer learning good practices in OECD countries, in particular relating to tackling climate change; and responding to the digital transformation and other cross-cutting challenges that can promote sustainable and inclusive growth. Members ask the Secretariat to analyse the key governance risks to the effective delivery of recovery plans and provide evidence-based advice on how to strengthen our capacity to overcome them, including through good examples and strategies for better decision making. This should include a focus on "spending better", managing trade-offs among policy areas, taking advantage of the best available science and data in decision making, and building trust by tackling dis- and misinformation, as well as limiting undue influence in policy-making and ensuring integrity and solid accountability processes. The success of the recovery will depend on the trust people have in the capacity of governments to deliver and to safeguard long-term interests.

Contributing to the 2020-2024 mandate of the Public Governance Committee to improve trust in government, this work should be co-ordinated with other OECD Committees working for inclusive and sustainable recovery. Members encourage the OECD to engage with its members in the design and implementation of recovery plans. The OECD Network of Senior Officials from Centres of Government agrees to reconvene towards the end of 2021 to review the available analysis and to consider the next steps in the recovery phase.