Recognition of specific needs, and an accelerated delivery of external assistance are essential if use is to be made of the current window of opportunity for reform in the newly independent Eurasian states.

This was the main overall conclusion from a workshop devoted to development aid principles and practices involving more than 100 participants, including aid policy-makers from member countries of OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC), international organisations and senior officials from 11 new Eurasian recipient states. Co-chaired by DAC Chairman Alexander R. Love and Ambassador Umut Arik, President of the Turkish International Co-operation Agency (TICA), the workshop was hosted by TICA at Antalya in southern Turkey from 18th to 21st January.

A concluding statement highlighted the main points summarised below after four days of comprehensive discussions between, on the one hand, aid donors, and, on the other, recipients from Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

-- DAC donors recognised the unique character and diversity of the Eurasian recipient countries and the specific nature of the development challenge facing their region.

-- Aid should flow as quickly as possible to these countries because timing is critical to the success of the transition process; donors must be more responsive to the priorities set out by the recipient countries.

-- Failure on the part of donors to respond quickly and with a new approach could engender frustration and even scepticism on the part of recipients as to donors’ real intentions.
-- Procedures must be accelerated, donor representation in the field strengthened, and communications and coordination improved so that decentralised decision-making can increase the effectiveness of aid.

-- Recipient representatives stressed their need for more complete information on donors' aid procedures and capabilities, and called for greater coordination among donors.

-- Recipients urged that more emphasis be placed on long-term development aid.

-- Recipients called on the donor community to streamline aid delivery mechanisms so as to avoid excessive bureaucratic procedures.

-- Recipients welcomed this first multilateral encounter with donors and called for the holding of regular workshops to review progress in external aid management.

-- All participants agreed that continuing review is needed to ensure that progress is made in addressing the issues identified by the Antalya workshop; they also undertook to report speedily to their governments on the problems and expectations characterising the development co-operation process now engaged with the Eurasian countries.