

OECD Week 2011: Message from U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Chair of the Ministerial Council Meeting



I am delighted to send warmest wishes to each of you at this year's Forum, taking place on the 50th Anniversary of the OECD. This milestone anniversary is not simply a recognition of the passage of time or the longevity of our institution. This Forum is also a commemoration of our 50 year commitment to the principles of economic cooperation and shared responsibility in advancing economic development and opportunity throughout the world. In expanding its original membership from 20 to 34 nations, engaging with major emerging economies, and expanding its outreach to countries around the world, the OECD has become an indispensable component of the global architecture for international cooperation. Our joint efforts have enabled the OECD to provide a steady hand guided by best practices, standards for effectiveness and accountability, critical research and unparalleled analysis to promote economic growth, employment, investment and trade, support sustainable development, and improve the functioning of markets over the past 50 years.

In doing so, the OECD has contributed to the progress of many developing countries, yielding a dynamic transformation of the global economic landscape. Developing nations are charting a new path and determining their own economic futures. Many of these nations, who only generations ago were crippled by endemic poverty and ineffective institutions now account for a fifth of global trade. Today, nations considered emerging economic powers now contribute to over 25% of global GDP. Millions have been lifted out of poverty and millions more have seen their standards of living increase.

While there is much to be proud of over the last 50 years, we must also take measure of the profound economic challenges that currently confront the global community. Climate change, unemployment, gender inequality in economic opportunity and slowing economic growth in developing countries are just several of the fundamental challenges that must be addressed. Imbalances threaten to cripple a strong recovery from the global financial crisis and hurt public trust in effective institutions. Indeed, the scope of these issues will demand solutions that can only be achieved through multilateral coordination and cooperation. In other words, the mission of the OECD is more important than ever.

As we gather to chart a clear vision and bold path forward for the OECD in solving these complex economic questions, we are reminded that the challenges facing our predecessors 50 years ago were no less profound. Let us be inspired by their wisdom and leadership in recognizing that peace, the preservation of individual liberty, economic prosperity and the betterment of humanity are best achieved and sustained through cooperation and shared responsibility.

Upon the ratification of the OECD convention, President Kennedy outlined his hopes for a “new era of cooperative enterprise among trans-Atlantic partners”. On this 50th anniversary, let us reaffirm our shared commitment to “better policies for better lives” as we usher in a new era of cooperation not only across the Atlantic, but among our partners throughout the world.

- Secretary Clinton

10 May 2011