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Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Economiques
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ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE
ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

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**EPOC 2004 MINISTERIAL MEETING: STATEMENT BY ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS ON
FURTHER WORK AT THE OECD ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Paris, 20-21 April 2004

This Statement was adopted by Environment Ministers during the Lunch session of the Meeting of the Environment Policy Committee at Ministerial Level on 20 April 2004.

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1. Environment Ministers present at the meeting of the Environment Policy Committee at Ministerial level in Paris, France, from 20-21 April 2004 recall the emphasis given by world leaders to the need to achieve sustainable development through Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Ministers further acknowledge the decision of OECD Ministers in 1998, reinforced in 2001, that the achievement of sustainable development is a key priority for OECD countries and therefore of the work programme of the OECD; and their agreement to interpret the term *sustainable* as including social and environmental, as well as economic considerations.
2. Environment Ministers recognise that OECD country economic and social ministers, as well as themselves, have a key role in furthering and making decisions on this work. They further recognised that sustainable development is important to ensure the future of the world's environment, social cohesion and economic growth.
3. In that context, Environment Ministers believe that the OECD has a vital role to strengthen and further sustainable development and that there is much to be usefully done by the OECD in its horizontal sustainable development work, with the aim of over time incorporating sustainable development into all aspects of OECD work.
4. It is thus important to have a mechanism for pursuing OECD work on sustainable development which will ensure that the economic, social and environmental interface is maintained and which improves co-ordination amongst Committees on these issues. Environment Ministers therefore *support* the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Group on Sustainable Development arising from its meeting on 17-18 March 2004, including the provision of resources for sustainable development work primarily through Part I resources, the establishment of an annual meeting of Sustainable Development Experts from all member countries including joint sessions with relevant Committee Chairs/Bureaus, a clear task for the Deputy Secretary-General, assisted by an overall co-ordinator for sustainable development, regular reports to Council from the meeting and the Deputy Secretary-General, and further consideration of these issues by the Sustainable Development Experts Group in 2006.
5. Environment Ministers invite the OECD Council to take the views expressed in this statement fully into consideration in its deliberations on the future of work in this area, while recognising the important role of EPOC in pursuing sustainable development by incorporating sustainability issues in its work programme.
6. Finally, they agree that OECD members should continue their work on sustainable development, including implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Doha Development Agenda and the Monterrey Consensus.