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## **OECD Countries are not on Track to Meet their Environmental Commitments**

OECD countries will not meet the environmental targets that they set for 2010 unless they introduce more ambitious policies supported by stronger political will.

This was the main conclusion of Environment Ministers meeting at the OECD on 20-21 April to take stock of progress towards implementing the OECD's Environmental Strategy, three years after its adoption by their governments.

Urgent action is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address the impact of climate change, limit biodiversity loss, and allow economic growth without seriously damaging the environment. Ministers and stakeholders agreed that they must set stable and long-term environmental targets to provide a predictable framework for national and international action. Based on this, viable and integrated policies can be developed using a mix of economic, financial and regulatory instruments. Phasing out environmentally harmful subsidies will be a priority, necessitating close co-operation between Environment and other ministries.

Seven non-OECD countries took part in the dialogue, and stakeholders from industry, trade unions and environmental citizens organisations were invited in a first-ever OECD initiative to open the environmental debate to wider public participation. Ministers stressed the need for OECD countries to work in partnerships with non-members to meet environmental challenges. China requested that OECD begin an environmental performance review as soon as 2005.

Ministers agreed on four immediate instruments, adopting a Statement requesting further OECD work on policies to encourage sustainable development and endorsing OECD Council Recommendations to support environmental policy design and monitoring of: the use of economic instruments to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; material flows and resource productivity; and assessment and decision-making for integrated transport and environmental policy.

Looking ahead, the Ministers asked the OECD to quantify the costs - for example for health, economy and environment - of not meeting environmental challenges, to analyse the effects of environmental policies on competitiveness, and to investigate the reasons why development partnerships are successful or not. Ministers also asked OECD to produce a new Environmental Outlook. The Environment ministers also said they would like to meet with their counterparts from Finance and Development in appropriate OECD fora.

Ministers agreed to meet again at OECD by 2008 in order to further evaluate their implementation of the Environmental Strategy.

The Chair's Summary is available at: [www.oecd.org/envmin2004](http://www.oecd.org/envmin2004).

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