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**Health, Economy and Trade Feature at OECD Forum 2004, Ministerial Meetings
12-14 May, 2004**

Ministers from OECD countries will hold two days of talks in Paris on 13-14 May 2004 on the economy, trade, and issues relating to health and ageing populations. Their meetings, to be chaired by Mexico, will draw on discussions at OECD Forum 2004, the OECD's annual civil society forum which takes place on 12-13 May 2004.

Journalists wishing to cover the annual OECD Ministerial Council Meeting, a meeting of OECD Health Ministers that will take place alongside it, and/or OECD Forum 2004 are invited to arrange accreditation using the online registration form.

This year's Ministerial Council Meeting, chaired by Mexico, will focus on the economic implications of ageing societies and on the outlook for international trade negotiations. For the first time, the OECD will also be welcoming health ministers in a parallel session. Beforehand, a number of ministers will participate in OECD Forum 2004, a multi-stakeholder event bringing together participants from government, business, academia and civil society. The theme of the Forum is the "Health of Nations" and its outcome will feed into the ministerial discussions. (For full details of OECD Forum 2004 please see www.oecd.org/forum2004)

The ministerial meetings are reserved for officials, but journalists are welcome to participate in the full proceedings of the Forum. **OECD Secretary General Donald Johnston and Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Ernesto Derbez will present the main themes and objectives of the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting at a media briefing at OECD Forum 2004, at the Kléber International Conference Centre in Paris, at 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday 12 May.** Closing news conferences will take place at OECD headquarters on Friday 14 May at 12.30 p.m. for the Health Ministerial and at 1.15 p.m. for the Ministerial Council Meeting.

Among other topics, ministers will address the challenges posed to OECD economies by demographic change. Without changes in existing policies, population ageing threatens to lead to slower economic growth in most OECD countries and a deterioration of public finances. The challenge is to design and implement labour market and social policies that will increase employment and preserve the long-run sustainability of public finances and, in particular, pensions.

Ministers will also review the outlook for the Doha Development Agenda, international trade talks, notably in relation to developing country concerns. A number of emerging and developing countries have been invited to participate in this part of their discussions.

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OECD health ministers, meanwhile, will consider the results of the OECD's three-year health project "*Towards High-Performing Health Systems*". Over the last three decades, there have been remarkable advances in health care. At the same time, the share of spending on health in total national spending in the OECD area has doubled. OECD analysis indicates, however, that there is considerable room to improve the efficiency of healthcare. Ministers of health will discuss how best to improve the performance of health systems. They will be joined by ministers of finance and economic affairs to consider the financial implications.

At 12.00 noon on Wednesday 12 May, OECD Forum 2004 will feature a keynote address by Nobel Peace Prize Winner and Former President of South Korea Kim Dae-jung on "Peace and Prosperity in Northeast Asia". At 4.30 p.m. the same day, French Foreign Affairs Minister Michel Barnier will address the Forum, and at 4.00 p.m. on Thursday 13 May, the Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Supachai Panitchpakdi, will participate in a panel discussion on "Creating Momentum in the Doha Development Agenda".

Other sessions will provide participants – business and labour leaders, civil society - with opportunities to discuss many of the same issues that will feature in the ministerial meetings.

Journalists will be able to hold interviews with speakers at OECD Forum 2004 between sessions. Events planned specifically for the media during the Forum and ministerial meetings are as follows (details will be regularly updated on the OECD's website):

- **Tuesday 11 May**
11.00 a.m. - News conference at OECD headquarters by Jean-Philippe Cotis, the OECD's Chief Economist, to present the OECD's Economic Outlook no. 75, giving latest OECD forecasts for major world economies.

- **Wednesday 12 May**
10.30 a.m. - Briefing at OECD Forum 2004, Centre International de Conférences Kléber, Avenue Kléber, 75016 Paris, on the themes and objectives of the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting by OECD Secretary-General Donald Johnston and Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Ernesto Derbez.
11.15 a.m. – Media seminar at OECD Forum 2004 on the economic and social implications of ageing populations, with Jean-Philippe Cotis, the OECD's Chief Economist.
1.15 p.m. – Launch at OECD Forum 2004 of the new OECD publication *Towards High Performing Health Systems*, with Mexican Health Minister Julio Frenk, Chair of the meeting of OECD Health Ministers, and OECD Secretary-General Donald Johnston.

- **Thursday 13 May**
9.00 a.m. – Breakfast briefing at OECD Forum 2004, Centre International de Conférences Kléber, Avenue Kléber, 75016 Paris, with Jean-François Martin, President of The Vaccine Fund.
10.00 a.m. – Media briefing at OECD Forum 2004 on the OECD's Economic Outlook no. 75, by OECD Chief Economist Jean-Philippe Cotis.
12.30 p.m. – Media briefing at OECD Forum 2004 following roundtable discussion with OECD health ministers.
6.15 p.m. – News conference at OECD headquarters on the first session of the Ministerial Council Meeting on economic issues and the economic impact of ageing populations, by the Chair of the session, Mexican Finance Minister Francisco Gil Díaz, with the two vice-chairs, Netherlands Minister of Economic Affairs Laurens Jan Brinkhorst and Iceland's Finance Minister Geir H. Haarde, OECD Secretary-General Donald Johnston and OECD Chief Economist Jean-Philippe Cotis.

- **Friday 14 May**

10.00 a.m. – News conference at OECD headquarters on future activities of the Financial Action Task Force, with Gunnar Lund, Sweden's Minister for International Economic Affairs and Financial Markets, Claes Norgren, President of the FATF, and Patrick Moulette, FATF Executive Secretary.

12.30 p.m. - Closing news conference at OECD headquarters by the Chair of the Health Ministers' meeting, Mexican Health Minister Julio Frenk, with the two vice-chairs, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy G. Thompson and Hungary's Minister of Health, Social and Family Affairs, Mihaly Kökény.

1.15 p.m. - Closing news conference at OECD headquarters by the Chair of the Ministerial Council Meeting, Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Ernesto Derbez, with OECD Secretary-General Donald Johnston.

2.00 p.m. – News briefing by U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick

Details of additional media briefings will be announced once the meetings are under way. Media facilities, including press rooms with computer and phone hook-ups, will be available. The OECD's TV, radio and videoconference studios will be available at OECD headquarters free of charge to broadcast journalists on a first come, first served basis. This includes cameras, editing facilities, ISDN lines and the necessary technicians. Further information about the Ministerial Council Meeting can be found at www.oecd.org/mcm2004 and about the Health Ministers' meeting at www.oecd.org/healthmin2004

For further assistance in relation to the ministerial meetings, journalists are invited to contact the OECD Media Relations Division (tel: [33] 1 45 24 97 00 or news.contact@oecd.org). For further assistance in relation to the Forum, journalists are invited to contact Meggan Dissly (tel: [33] 1 45 24 80 94 or meggan.dissly@oecd.org).