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## OECD Organises Forum on the Role of Statistics in Democracies Palermo, 10-13 November 2004

Statistics affect many aspects of our existence. In today's rapidly changing world, people in all walks of life need trustworthy data on which to base choices and decisions. But who decides what is measured, and how do they measure it? Who checks the results, and what role do statistics play in democratic societies?

To examine these and other related questions, the OECD is organising a **World Forum on Key Indicators in Palermo, Italy, on 10-13 November 2004**. The event, titled "Statistics, Knowledge and Policy: OECD World Forum on Key Indicators", is intended to promote international research- and information-sharing and to allow countries to compare how they measure "progress" in their societies.

The Forum, **which is open to the media**, will bring together statistical experts from around the world, along with policy makers, academics and representatives of business and civil society.

In addition to top-level OECD experts, speakers will include: Luigi Biggeri, President of the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT); Kristin Clemet, Minister of Education, Norway; Len Cook, National Statistician of the United Kingdom; Kathleen Cooper, Undersecretary of Economic Affairs, U.S. Department of Commerce, United States; Jean-Vijayendra N. Kaul, Comptroller and Auditor General of India; Li Jinhua, Auditor General, National Audit Office, China; Edmond Malinvaud, Professor, College de France, France; Muneharu Otsuka, Commissioner, Board of Audit of Japan; Jean-François Rischard, Vice-President of the World Bank; Domenico Siniscalco, Minister of Economy and Finance, Italy; Eduardo Sojo, Senior Public Policy Advisor to the President, Mexico; Dennis Trewin, National Statistician of Australia; Jean-Claude Trichet, President of the European Central Bank; Marco Tronchetti Provera, President of Telecom Italia; Katherine Wallman, Chief Statistician, Office of Management and Budget, United States; and David Walker, Comptroller General of the United States of America.

Over the last decade, OECD countries and the European Union have been developing sets of indicators to evaluate both the evolution of economic, social and environmental phenomena and the quality of policies undertaken by public authorities. These indicators are used for benchmarking and to assess the relative performances of national or local communities. In parallel, a few countries (Australia, Ireland, Canada and now United States) have launched national projects reporting on an agreed set of indicators covering economic, social and environmental domains. Lessons learned from these experiences will form one of the main topics of the Forum.

The Forum will involve both plenary and parallel sessions. In particular, there will be:

- Four plenary sessions on best practices developed by countries representing various world regions (Australia, the United States, Ireland and Italy);

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- One plenary session on the international dimension of the development of key indicators (European Union, United Nations and OECD);
- One plenary session on the role of key indicators for fostering policy coherence, with the involvement of Heads of Prime Ministers' Cabinet Offices;
- Two plenary sessions with keynote speakers on their vision of future developments in modern societies;
- Four groups of four parallel sessions each on thematic areas including: information domains; process building; advocacy and numeracy for key indicators; uses of key indicators for policy making.
- A round table discussion during the afternoon of Friday 12 November of the role of the media in presenting and explaining statistics to a broader public.

In addition, thematic workshops will be organised just before the start of the Forum to present and discuss OECD work to build comparable statistics and indicators for policy and analytical use in specific subject areas.

Papers and publications based on key indicators developed in various OECD countries will be available before the Forum. In addition, the OECD has developed a Knowledge Base which contains 200 documents highlighting the "state of the art" on key indicators in selected areas (environment, education, society, etc.).

For further details, please see the Forum website at [www.oecd.org/oecdworldforum](http://www.oecd.org/oecdworldforum). Journalists wishing to attend the Forum are invited to contact Stephen Di Biasio, OECD's Media Relations Division (tel. 33 1 45 24 81 03 or [Stephen.dibiasio@oecd.org](mailto:Stephen.dibiasio@oecd.org)).