

## ENVIRONMENT

29. Continuing environmental deterioration will threaten the achievement of sustainable economic development and an improved quality of life for all. It is therefore essential that all countries actively participate in confronting the range of environmental problems, including those of a global nature. The OECD countries bear a special responsibility in this respect. The recent series of high-level conferences and meetings make an important contribution to the process of international cooperation.

30. Given the magnitude, urgency and potential economic, social and ecological implications of environmental problems, all relevant national, regional and international organisations will have to be mobilised in the most effective and efficient way. The OECD will cooperate fully in this process and, building upon the work on environmental problems it has carried out over twenty years, will focus on those aspects where, by nature of its membership and structure, it can make a particular contribution.

31. Ministers reaffirmed the critical importance of integrating more systematically and effectively environment and economic decision-making, as a means of contributing to sustainable economic development. Taking advantage of its capacity in the field of economic analysis, the OECD will work to place environmental decision-making on firm analytical ground with respect to costs, benefits and resource implications of environmental proposals and initiatives, selection among policy options and, where appropriate, to develop methods to ensure that environmental considerations become an integral part of economic policy-making. Particular attention will be paid to breaking new ground in such areas as: integrating environmental considerations into economic growth models; analysing environment-trade relationships; determining how price and other mechanisms can be used to achieve environmental objectives; assessing the economic costs and benefits of possible responses, including technologies, to cope with atmospheric, climatic, marine and other global environmental problems (in coordination with the work carried out in other competent bodies); and elaborating in economic terms the 'sustainable development' concept.

32. In this respect intensified efforts for technological breakthrough are important to reconcile economic growth and environmental protection. The OECD will examine incentives and barriers to the innovation and diffusion of environmental technologies. It will also promote expanded information exchange on technological options.