



The Head of Public Affairs  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORATE  
Public Affairs Division

24<sup>th</sup> April 2012

Dear Ms. Nedergaard,

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to OECD Forum 2012 ([www.oecdforum.org](http://www.oecdforum.org)) which will take place on 22-23 May in the OECD Conference Centre, Paris.

The OECD Forum, which is held back-to-back with the Ministerial Council meeting on 23-24 May, has become a notable feature on the international calendar. It gathers high-level speakers from all stakeholder groups — government ministers, CEOs, heads of NGOs, academia and trade unions — and attracts a high-quality audience of some 1 500 invited participants. In addition to networking at the event, social media, blogs and international media are used to reach a range of audiences worldwide.

**Tackling inequality, inclusive growth and generating trust** will be the cross-cutting themes of OECD Forum 2012. The recent surge in social movements across the world is a clear call for an economy that is better balanced and more ethical. Inequality was rising before the global financial crisis and has further increased, especially in countries where long-term unemployment has risen sharply. With more than 200 million people worldwide now out of work, creating jobs is vital, but it is not enough. People aspire to a society that allows them to thrive and prosper. Expectations for better public and private sector governance are rising. At a time when governments are designing strategies to restore long-term, inclusive growth, we need to respond to these aspirations and link economic growth with broader, societal progress.

The *OECD Economic Outlook* will be launched during the Forum. Other key issues on the agenda include:

**Inclusive growth:** How can we redesign tax and benefit systems, labour markets, education and training systems in ways that will contribute to **reducing inequality**, while sustaining growth and employment? This task is made even more difficult in today's environment of fiscal constraints.

**Youth:** Young people face significant barriers to finding worthwhile employment. In finding solutions, current policies must be reviewed and new options created, together with policy reforms in social, employment, education and other sectors to allow these initiatives to succeed.

**Middle Classes:** Long standing systems of value and safety, core to the middle classes, have been shattered by the crisis. Home ownership, educational opportunities, secure retirement, stable jobs and social mobility are threatened. At the same time, the middle classes in new and emerging economies are growing and they have the



same needs for services such as education, healthcare and social security. However, the high level of economic growth in new and emerging economies has not necessarily led to improvements in standards of living.

**Better Life Index:** The OECD will be launching an updated *Better Life Index* (BLI), integrating new dimensions on gender and inequality; adding new indicators on sustainability; creating time series to draw long-term comparisons between data; and extending the geographical dimension by including additional countries (<http://oecdbetterlifeindex.org/>).

**Gender:** Women and men have different preferences and varying incentives when making decisions about studying, working and caring for their families. The OECD will be launching a *Gender Initiative* to strengthen gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship, three crucial dimensions of economic opportunity.

**Skills:** Skills are of critical importance in today's workplace. During the crisis, job losses amongst skilled workers have been lower than those of unskilled workers, demonstrating that in a globally competitive, knowledge-based economy, a skilled workforce is necessary to ensure productivity and sustainable growth. These concerns are at the heart of the *OECD Skills Strategy*, to be launched in May 2012.

**Development:** How can policy makers contribute effectively to inclusive and sustainable growth for the largest number of countries? The OECD will be launching a new *Strategy on Development* which will look into innovative and sustainable sources of growth; mobilising resources for development; good governance; and measuring progress for development.

You will find the most relevant moments from the OECD Forum 2011 in the [Highlights magazine](#) which we hope will whet your appetite for this year's event.

On behalf of the OECD, I would like to invite the Finance Committee of the Danish Parliament to contribute to the Forum debates. If you wish to take advantage of this invitation, please send an email indicating the names of interested Committee members to [oe.cd.forum@oecd.org](mailto:oe.cd.forum@oecd.org).

I look forward to seeing you at the OECD Forum.

Yours sincerely,

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