

2020 Ministerial Meeting on Migration and Integration

**Opening Remarks by Angel Gurría
OECD Secretary-General**

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(As prepared for delivery)

Chère conseillère fédérale Keller-Sutter, chers ministres, Mesdames et Messieurs:

Je suis ravi de vous accueillir à la Réunion Ministérielle de l'OCDE de 2020 sur les migrations et l'intégration. Il est encourageant de voir autant de ministres et de représentants de haut niveau du monde entier participer aux importantes discussions d'aujourd'hui.

Votre travail est essentiel pour façonner l'avenir des politiques de migration et d'intégration et pour les préparer à en assurer la conformité, à définir des voies légales pour des migrations sûres et régulières, et à favoriser une intégration stable. Vos politiques sont également essentielles pour renforcer la confiance du public sur cette question sensible.

Mais nous ne sommes pas réunis ici uniquement pour parler de politiques. Le sujet de la migration concerne avant tout des individus, des êtres humains. Il est de notre responsabilité d'alimenter nos discussions avec des solutions plus axées sur l'humain.

In your folders – in addition to a box of Swiss chocolates kindly provided by the Chair of today's meeting, Federal Councillor Keller-Sutter – you will find a booklet presenting a wide variety of films on migration. In almost all OECD countries, cinema has looked at how migration affects us as individuals, as families, as societies. As you flip through these different portrayals of the human stories of migration, you will see the range of individual aspirations and struggles, of achievements and frustrations.

The important contribution of international migration

We all know that international migration, and migrants themselves, can contribute to economic growth and social development. From 2009 to 2018, bouncing back from the global financial crisis, the employment rate of migrants increased in OECD countries by 4.7 percentage points, very close to the 4.5 percentage point increase for the native-born. In three out of 10 OECD countries, the employment rate for migrants is higher than for natives; and in a further three out of 10 countries, the employment gap with natives has closed over the past decade. But these changes haven't happened automatically. Good policies, informed by data, have been key.

For more than four decades, the OECD has been monitoring migration trends through our annual International Migration Outlook, which is now in its 43rd edition. Our work shows how migration flows can change and integration outcomes can shift. The country cards in your folders provide snapshots of the latest statistics on different migration and integration indicators. We encourage you to compare cards with your peers throughout the day to foster mutual learning.

One of the OECD's main objectives is to help our Members prepare for the future, to create conditions that promote the well-being of all our citizens; for those born locally, as well as for the 129 million immigrants who have become residents in OECD countries and who represent about 13% of our populations.

Identifying and addressing migration challenges

I look forward to hearing about your achievements and good practices here today. But we cannot only look at our past successes; we also need to address some hard questions. How can we prepare for the future? What policies will allow us to adapt to shocks and emerging trends in migration and integration? How can we foster stronger international co operation on migration? What innovations can we draw on? How can we engage the whole of society?

Despite the great diversity of situations across countries, these are key questions for all of us. This is why we collectively chose "Making Migration and Integration Policies Future Ready" as the theme of today's meeting.

To support our discussions, we've worked with colleagues from your Ministries – through the OECD Working Party on Migration – to identify the main challenges we already face and assess potential disruptions that might deeply reshape migration policy making going forward.

A brief video summarising the main findings of this exercise will kick off our first session. As you will see, in the future, migration and integration might look very different from today. Migration is constantly evolving and we need to be ready to adapt.

Some trends, however, are clear. For example, international migrants are more educated than ever before. Between 2000 and 2016, the share of migrants with a high level of education rose from 27% to 35% for those born outside of the OECD area, while it rose only from 21% to 30% for those born in an OECD country. This is even more marked among immigrants who arrived in the early 2010s: two out of five are highly-educated, and highly-educated migrants outnumber low-educated migrants. Women comprise 51% of all migrants in general and 53% of high-skilled migrants.

Shaping future migration and integration policies

In this context of rapidly evolving migration and integration, today we will be discussing four key issues that are central in shaping future policies.

First, the need to innovate the management of labour migration, which is expanding in many of our countries. Today, we know more than ever before about the needs of our labour markets and societies and how we can

identify the right candidates. We have more sophisticated tools for attracting, selecting, managing and retaining labour migrants.

Second, managed migration means that states maintain control over flows, with a greater compliance with the conditions of residence. Migration policy does not work without effective enforcement. Technology, when used right, can make it easier to comply for those in good faith, and harder to abuse the system for those in bad faith. But it is not only technology that matters; partnerships and information sharing are also crucial.

Third, we need to be more innovative in developing integration policies. Many of the transformations that affect labour market policy in general also affect migrant integration. We need to identify, build and assess skills outside of traditional qualifications frameworks. During our discussions today, we will also look at the changing nature of work and new approaches and actors in service provision.

Finally, migration and integration policy involves a range of ministries, along with many other actors. Public and private, business and non-profit, local, regional, national and even international actors all play important roles. Delegating authority, setting standards and engaging with these actors is one of the challenges for success.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Our world is changing and one thing is clear: migration will remain a defining feature of our economies and societies. The OECD stands ready to work with you to help harness the potential of migration and integration.

We look forward to your guidance in orienting the OECD's future work on migration and integration. How can we best support you in preparing for the changes we expect? What can we do to help make policies more resilient in the face of unexpected circumstances? How can we assist in bringing more stakeholders into this effort? What issues can we address together, sharing experiences and comparing achievements? I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.