



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
9 June 2020

Original: English

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## Seventy-fifth session

### **Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the seventy-fifth session**

### **Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development**

### **Letter dated 3 June 2020 from the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

Pursuant to rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the Governments of Slovakia and Spain have the honour to jointly request the inclusion of a sub-item entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development”, under the item entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations”, in the provisional agenda of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, enclosed herewith is an explanatory memorandum (see annex).

We should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

*(Signed)* Michal **Mlynár**  
Ambassador,  
Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations

*(Signed)* Agustín **Santos Maraver**  
Ambassador,  
Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations



**Annex****Explanatory memorandum****Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development****Background**

1. An intergovernmental organization founded in 1960, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is the successor organization to the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, which was formed in 1948 to run the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe following the Second World War. Its founding document, the Convention on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, makes explicit the link between economic strength and prosperity and the attainment of the purposes of the United Nations.
2. Following the accession of Colombia in April 2020, OECD has 37 members spanning the Americas, Europe, Asia and the Pacific. Costa Rica has, as of May 2020, been invited to join the Organization. Today, OECD works with over 100 partner economies through targeted regional and country programmes, as well as participation in the work of OECD bodies, the implementation of OECD instruments and involvement in OECD analytic and advisory work.
3. OECD has a long history of participation in the work of the United Nations. In 1971, the Economic and Social Council decided to extend a standing invitation to OECD to participate as an observer in the work of the Council.<sup>1</sup> In 1998, the General Assembly invited the OECD to participate as an observer in its sessions and work.<sup>2</sup>
4. Following the major United Nations agreements of 2015, OECD decided, in consultation with the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General at the time, to establish a permanent observer office at United Nations Headquarters. That decision reflected the desire of OECD to strengthen its partnership with the United Nations system and put its expertise and policy tools at the disposal of the United Nations in support of the major agreements of 2015 and others.
5. The OECD secretariat first deployed a senior official to the position of Special Representative and Permanent Observer at United Nations Headquarters in 2016. In the second half of 2020, OECD will inaugurate its first permanent offices at United Nations Headquarters, coinciding with the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and the sixtieth anniversary of OECD.

**Areas of cooperation**

6. Cooperation between OECD and the United Nations system spans almost every policy area in the economic, environmental and social domains. This includes participation in relevant bodies of the respective organizations; the exchange of data and analysis between the organizations; and targeted, joint initiatives in support of developing countries. The OECD publication *Active with the United Nations* provides a comprehensive overview of areas of collaboration.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Economic and Social Council decision of 20 May 1971.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolution 53/6 of 15 October 1998.

<sup>3</sup> OECD, *Active with the United Nations* (Paris, OECD Publishing, 2019). Available at <https://issuu.com/oecd.publishing/docs/active-with-un>.

7. An action plan on the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in 2016, frames much of the contribution of OECD to the United Nations agenda.<sup>4</sup> The contribution of OECD to United Nations efforts on financing for development, for example, is widely recognized. OECD is an active participant in the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, contributing extensively to annual reports produced under the auspices of the United Nations. It was also recently invited to join the inter-agency task force on graduation from the least developed country category and is working hand-in-hand with the United Nations system to ensure that its work on transition finance has maximum impact in those countries that stand to benefit from it. The expertise and instruments of OECD have been drawn on in Security Council resolutions on, for example, conflict minerals and due diligence.

8. OECD and the United Nations regional commissions collaborate regularly in the production of joint analysis, including regional economic outlooks. In the area of tax, OECD and the United Nations Development Programme have partnered to host the Tax Inspectors Without Borders initiative, which in its first four years helped to deliver an additional \$500 billion in tax revenue for developing countries. Over 70 programmes are either under way or completed, with another 19 in the pipeline.

9. In the area of statistics, the OECD Chief Statistician is an active participant in the work of the Statistical Commission, and both secretariats participate in an ongoing exchange of data and expertise. OECD has also contributed to United Nations efforts on Sustainable Development Goal follow-up and review, by providing policy insights and evidence to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, among other avenues. Recent General Assembly resolutions have recognized the contribution of OECD-hosted bodies on tax to the advancement of financing efforts.

10. In the area of social affairs, OECD benefits from its long-standing cooperation with the United Nations Secretariat, as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, on migration issues. OECD regularly provides evidence on international migration, as well as robust analysis of its economic dimensions and policy implications. This has included, for example, the organization of joint conferences on international migration statistics with the United Nations. OECD is also an active contributor to United Nations efforts on gender equality and women's empowerment. A memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) has laid the foundations for a deepening of cooperation in this area including through, for example, joint efforts on gender budgeting, as well as planned collaboration through the forthcoming Generation Equality mobilization effort. OECD is also an active stakeholder in the Generation Unlimited initiative of the United Nations Children's Fund, which is aimed at boosting opportunities for youth worldwide.

11. OECD and the United Nations system also work closely on a range of environmental issues. In recent years, for example, OECD has been called on by member States to provide estimates of the progress towards the \$100 billion climate finance objective. OECD work in the environmental domain also covers biodiversity, water and oceans, green growth, chemicals and transport.

12. In recent months, governments worldwide have been working to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its economic and social consequences. From the outset of the crisis, OECD and relevant United Nations entities have worked closely to pool expertise. Over the coming days and weeks, senior OECD officials are expected to contribute to various high-level meetings on

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<sup>4</sup> OECD, "Better policies for 2030: an OECD action plan on the Sustainable Development Goals", endorsed by the OECD Council on 13 December 2016.

the COVID-19 response held under the auspices of the United Nations. OECD has also diverted significant analytical capacity to monitoring the COVID-19 crisis globally, tracking policy responses in both OECD and partner economies and providing policy advice wherever possible.

### **Conclusions**

13. The year 2020 will mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and the sixtieth anniversary of OECD. The coming months will provide an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of both organizations, as well as the global challenges with which both are confronted, and the opportunities to further strengthen the interface between the two, building on their respective strengths and comparative advantages.

14. OECD committees and directorates are already actively engaged in preparations for several major United Nations conferences in 2020, including the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Lisbon) and the planned summit on biodiversity (New York, September). OECD events are also being planned around other major meetings, including the Statistical Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women in March, the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up in April, the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals in May and the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July. As in previous years, OECD will also contribute to some of the meetings of the regional sustainable development forums, organized by the United Nations regional commissions.

15. The inclusion of a sub-item entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development”, under the item entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations”, in the provisional agenda of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly will serve to profile this important relationship and to encourage all States Members of the United Nations to provide guidance on how OECD can best support the agendas of the United Nations.

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