

MATHIAS CORMANN
Australia's Candidate

Secretary-General
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
2021-26



VISION STATEMENT FOR SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OECD

I am ambitious for the OECD and what it can achieve with members, for members, and most importantly, for the people in our member states. I see the OECD as a forum for discussing global problems to identify collective solutions that can be implemented at the national level.

My vision as Secretary-General is for the Organisation to play a leading and central role in global policy setting. I will ensure the OECD empowers its members, helps them overcome their individual and shared challenges, and enables them to take advantage of new opportunities.

My commitment as Secretary-General is to lead an OECD which is:

- the world's centre of excellence for credible, evidence-based economic analysis, advice and policy guidance;
- focused on members' needs and true to members' shared democratic values of opportunity, prosperity and stability for all;
- a strong advocate of economic openness, transparency and international rules and standards; and
- engaged with all the world's regions, including the Asia-Pacific.

The OECD makes a difference to the lives and livelihoods of billions of people every day. It helps to improve living standards, build social cohesion and strengthen environmental performance not just in its own member nations, but in the global economy more broadly. It does so by sharing information, developing policy best practice and agreeing standards and norms, which promote growth and productivity.

The key to the OECD's success is the willingness of its member economies to share their successes and failures and to co-operate with others to find solutions to an ever-changing range of policy challenges. We all benefit when we all grow and prosper. While members compete fiercely in global markets every day, we recognise the sum of our efforts to be greater than its parts. As a trusted source of data and analysis, members and partners will be looking to the OECD for evidence-based analysis and policy innovation.

Today we collectively confront the devastating social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. No country has been immune from the speed and scale of the shock, which is resulting in substantial loss of life, income and wellbeing. It is having unequal impacts within and across countries, with young people, low income earners and women among the hardest hit. The pandemic is also fuelling strategic and economic uncertainty. As a result, the role of the OECD in working with its members to drive growth, cohesion and above all, cooperation, has never been more important.

Restoring confidence to drive global economic recovery

As we navigate through the immediate and longer-term effects of the pandemic, the OECD's community of members, contributors and observers will look to it for practical, pragmatic and realistic policy guidance. The OECD must work swiftly with member countries to maximise the strength of an inclusive and sustainable economic and jobs recovery. It must continue its essential work of rigorous evidence-based analysis measuring the economic, environmental and social performance of its members' policies and programs. And it must be an open and dynamic place to inspire and facilitate learning, exchange and collaboration.

I have first-hand experience helping to navigate Australia through the early impact of the pandemic and putting our country on a pathway for a strong, sustainable and inclusive recovery. Through 2020, I worked with my colleagues to develop and implement a comprehensive suite of social and economic initiatives to protect the vulnerable, sustain employment, secure business survival, and bolster supply chains.

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Our recovery plan was generous but responsible, comprehensive in scope but targeted to those in most need, and designed to ensure an early, strong and sustainable recovery.

The importance of co-operation has never been greater, whether in dealing with the pandemic, meeting the climate challenge, addressing education and skills needs, the promise and challenges of the digital economy, or narrowing differences on taxation policy.

Under my leadership I would invite members to focus on shared priorities, including:

- strengthening economic resilience;
- achieving sustainable and inclusive growth in living standards;
- expanding global trade and investment;
- setting standards for the digital economy, facilitating innovation; and
- designing more effective, efficient and equitable taxation systems.

Shaping policies for future prosperity and stability

In the face of the enormous global shock, we need to remain agile, vigilant and guard against other risks, such as financial crises, natural disasters and climate change. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and highlighted some systemic weaknesses – for example on health infrastructure, in labour markets (including the self-employed and SMEs), in global supply chains, in the areas of energy and climate, and on gender issues. We also need to ensure that the OECD plays a leading role in the international fight against foreign bribery and corruption.

Across the OECD's diverse membership, different countries and regions around the world have different opportunities to make the strongest possible contribution to our collective emissions reduction outcomes and the net-zero emissions target locked into the Paris Agreement. We all face similar transition challenges and can all agree that effective global action on climate change is a must and we must get to zero net emissions as soon as possible. Climate policy responses will increasingly need to factor into long-term planning. Economic recovery efforts to COVID-19 are a key opportunity to target support towards investments that drive the development and commercialisation of new technologies. Through the OECD, we can come together to share ideas about our collective green recovery effort on our journey towards a low emissions future. As Secretary-General I will strive to make the OECD a place that inspires collaboration and action in support of a sustainable future.

Our economies are also becoming more digitalised. The OECD has a broad digital agenda – from traditional analysis of business dynamics and productivity – to e-commerce and artificial intelligence. This work has become one of the OECD's most important and valuable equities – both directly – and through links to other policy areas such as taxation, education and anti-corruption measures. We need to grasp the opportunities from technological and scientific advances, while balancing how to ensure inclusive benefits. To guide and drive this transition, as Secretary-General, I would ensure the OECD focuses on assisting technological adoption, adapting education and skills training, and promoting innovation.

Empowering members

Leadership requires active engagement with members to ensure the OECD serves their interests. By listening to members and facilitating focused, strategic policy debate – looking at the issues, exploring ideas, and overlaying values – the OECD can support members to chart a way forward. I would draw on the expert, peer-reviewed work of OECD committees, systematically explore the impacts of different options, and actively seek out members' views. This process of listening for the consensus is the surest way to identify solutions.

As Secretary-General, I will lead a whole-of-OECD effort to harness the Organisation's strategic competence and capabilities. I recognise that the OECD Council must be fully engaged in this broader strategic dialogue. To make this a success, I will focus and energise the entire OECD team, including senior management, policy experts and staff. I will also personally engage with Committee heads and members to harness their strategic expertise.

OECD members have always understood the importance of non-members to the Organisation and to the global economy more broadly. I understand that members are currently evaluating the Organisation's strategy on Global Relations. This work is vital to ensure that the OECD's objectives and mechanisms for non-member engagement remain clear, contemporary and fit for purpose for 2020 and beyond.

I will progress the outcomes of this process. It is in members' own interest to forge deeper and stronger relations with non-members on the basis of shared member values. This will continue to be one of the most important elements of the OECD. Members benefit from the perspectives and experience that non-members can bring – diversity and contestability of ideas will only ever strengthen the value of the organisation to its Members.

Strengthening the impact and influence of the OECD

Global reach is an integral part of the OECD's influence. I want to lead the OECD in ways that strengthen partnerships, increase resilience, and ensure inclusion. Towards this, I would enhance its advisory role, in areas of comparative advantage, to help shape the strategic direction of other important institutions including the UN, G7, G20, the IMF, the WTO and APEC. The next Secretary-General will also need to be able to build consensus and extract the benefits of a diversity of views across diverse policy challenges. This will require both energy and empathy to build consensus and a collective commitment to action.

I will lead by example to:

1. **Promote OECD Values:** Uphold the OECD Convention and promote members' shared democratic values of opportunity, prosperity and stability for all.
2. **Act as an Institutional Steward:** Protect and enhance the reputation of the OECD as the world's centre of excellence for serious, credible, evidence-based economic analysis, advice and policy guidance.
3. **Optimise Resources:** Manage the resources of the OECD according to member priorities, and do so in a way that is efficient, ethical, transparent and accountable to members.
4. **Respect and Harness Diversity:** Recognize, respect and harness the diversity of member policy experiences and protect and enhance the reputation of members.
5. **Facilitate Debate:** Provide a safe space for members to engage in critical and ambitious policy discussions and debates, whether in the Council, the OECD's committees, or other internal OECD fora.
6. **Build Consensus:** Strive to build consensus and a collective commitment to action amongst the OECD's membership.
7. **Act as Members' Voice:** Engage on members' behalf with all the world's regions and act as a strong advocate for the OECD and its founding principles of economic openness and transparency, international rules and standards, and members' consensus-agreed positions.

We will rebuild our economies, indeed all economies, more quickly if our international cooperation is strong, including in the OECD. I firmly believe that my national and international experience, and my depth of understanding of the challenges facing our global community, positions me well to lead the OECD through this historic and difficult period.