

December 2011 – Vol. XII, No. 4

BIAC hosts International Green Economy Dialogue Conference

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Mr. Brian P. Flannery, Exxon Mobil Corporation (right) with BIAC Secretary General Tadahihiro Asami (left) and Ms. Hanni Rosenbaum, BIAC Senior Policy Manager at the Paris Green Economies Dialogue.

On 14 November, BIAC welcomed close to 100 experts from business, governments, OECD, UNEP and key academics to an International Business Green Economies Dialogue conference at the OECD Headquarters.

The Paris conference was organised as the second part of a business-led series of discussions in North America, Europe, Asia and South America, in the run-up to the Rio+20 Earth Summit in June 2012. The first conference took place in Washington in October, and two further conferences will be organised during the first half of 2012, one in Japan and one in Brazil, with the active participation of BIAC.

The Green Economy Dialogue project, launched by a range of sponsors and partners with primary support from USCIB, the United States Council Foundation (USCF) and BIAC, aims to promote a productive approach to greener growth with due recognition for both opportunities and challenges. It is also intended to increase dialogue with governments in the run-up to Rio+20, and to share business views.

In addition, the project involves commissioning a number of peer-reviewed, academic papers on various aspects of green growth and green economy to inform the debate leading up to Rio+20 and going forward after the event.

The Paris conference drew on the work on green growth carried out by the OECD and actively engaged representatives from different parts of the Organisation in the discussions.

Specific sessions focused on green growth for development and job creation; policy instruments; energy; and resource efficiency. Sessions were introduced by presentations of key academics, followed by reactions from experts from business, national governments and international organisations as well as an interactive discussion with all participants around the table.

Among others, it was highlighted that green growth policies should consider how to maximize growth across the economy, which underlines the need for credible and sustained public policies so that the necessary investments come forward.

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Reminder – The BIAC Secretariat offices will be closed from 26 to 30 December inclusive. Our offices reopen on Tuesday, 3 January 2012.

We wish you all the best for the holiday season, and a prosperous new year.



Green Dialogue (continued from page 1)

While there is a wealth of information on climate change, participants underlined that resource efficiency deserves increased attention in the context of greener growth. Integrated policy approaches to address interrelated challenges will require specific attention in the Rio+20 discussions. Many governments highlighted the importance of cooperation with the private sector, which underlines the importance of flexible bottom-up approaches and partnerships as part of the way forward.

Additional materials can be found at the Green Economies Dialogue website www.green-dialogue.org. For further information, please contact Hanni Rosenbaum (rosenbaum@biac.org).



BIAC Secretary General Tadahiro Asami (center) speaking during the Paris Dialogues opening session.

BIAC active in B20 and OECD G20-focused activities

Over the course of the 2011 G20 French Presidency, BIAC actively contributed to both the B20 process and the OECD G20-focused activities. This helped strengthen broad business support to the G20 Business Summit (B20) and G20 Leaders' Summit on 2-4 November 2011 in Cannes.

BIAC's French member organisation MEDEF successfully led the B20 input to the G20; focusing on 12 topics crucial to the business community, including among others economic policies, employment, energy, and global governance. The Presidents of the business confederations of the G20 countries, as well as 120 CEOs and Chairmen from a number of global companies worked together for several months, with BIAC Chairman Charles Heeter participating in the group on Anti-Corruption. Mr. Heeter and BIAC Secretary General also participated in the G20 Business Summit (B20) on 2-3 November.

At the same time, the OECD, working alongside other major international organisations, notably the FSB, ILO, IMF, UN, World Bank and WTO, has been an active participant in G20 meetings and summits, providing analysis, data and policy recommendations.

Numerous BIAC policy groups contributing to OECD's G20-related activities, particularly in the following areas: bribery and corruption; development, employment and social policies, environment and energy, finance, green growth and taxation.

In Cannes, the adoption of the G20 Action Plan on Growth and Jobs and the G20's decision to set up a Task Force on Employment focusing on youth are two achievements of direct relevance to OECD-BIAC work. In addition, all G20 countries signed up to the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administration in Tax Matters, an initiative led by the OECD. Further details on BIAC's contributions to OECD G20-focused activities are available online at www.biac.org/news/111031_biac_contributions_to_oecd-g20.htm.

BIAC strongly supports the increased OECD role in the G20 process. Looking ahead, BIAC looks forward to contributing to B20 and OECD activities towards the Mexican Presidency of the G20. Please contact Jonathan Greenhill (greenhill@biac.org) for further information.

Save the Date

2012

BIAC General Assembly

BIAC will organise its next General Assembly during 22-24 May 2012, the dates of the OECD Ministerial (MCM).

OECD Business active at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness

Speaking at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4) on 29 November – 1 December in Busan, BIAC Secretary General Tadahiro Asami stated that “private sector-led economic growth is the means to alleviate poverty and strengthen the economic well-being of people”. In order to unlock the potential of the private sector in developing countries, there is a need for greater public-private co-operation and political leadership to implement policies creating an enabling environment for foreign investment and domestic private sector growth.

BIAC welcomed the Korean government’s decision to invite (for the first-time) private sector participation to the HLF. In response, BIAC co-organised a high-level Private Sector Forum on 30 November, in co-operation with the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI), for representatives from business, governments and multinational institutions to discuss public-private co-operation for growth and development.

BIAC also played an instrumental role in drafting a joint public-private statement for development co-operation, which has since been endorsed by 40 business organisations, companies, national governments and multinational institutions from around the world. The statement can be found online at: www.oecd.org/dataoecd/25/36/49211825.pdf

Looking ahead, BIAC is committed to continuing its work with the OECD on improving development effectiveness. Please contact Jonathan Greenhill (greenhill@biac.org) for further information.



BIAC Secretary General Tadahiro Asami participated at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4) in Busan.

OECD Environment Ministerial to contribute to Rio+20 Conference

OECD Environment Ministers will meet on 29-30 March 2012 to discuss how to operationalise green growth based on the outcome of the OECD Green Growth Strategy. The OECD is now following up this strategy by supporting national and international efforts to achieve green growth. Environment Ministers will in particular be looking at what green growth means for environmental policy making.

A key part of the meeting will be devoted to discussing how the Green Growth Strategy can be used by countries with different resource endowments, environmental pressures and states of development. As the OECD Environment Ministerial will take place ahead of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June, the OECD Ministerial will present an excellent opportunity for Ministers to make a positive contribution to Rio+20.

An important input to the Ministerial meeting will be the new OECD Environmental Outlook to 2050, to which BIAC has actively contributed.

Ministerial to discuss how the OECD's Green Growth Strategy can be used by countries with different resource endowments, environmental pressures and states of development.

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Environment Ministerial (continued from page 3)

BIAC expects to play an active role at the March 2012 Environment Ministerial and provide direct business input to the discussions.

BIAC participated in the Global Forum on the Environmental Outlook and submitted comments on the four areas identified, i.e. climate change, biodiversity, water and the health impacts of pollution, highlighting key business considerations and the proactive contribution that business can make to address these challenges. The BIAC comments on the environmental outlook are available on the BIAC members' only website.

Ministers will also be presented with a report on what has been achieved and what remains to be done ten years after the "Environmental Strategy for the First Decade of the 21st Century" was adopted by OECD Environment Ministers in 2001.

BIAC expects to play an active role at the March 2012 Environment Ministerial and provide direct business input to the discussions. For further information, please contact Hanni Rosenbaum (rosenbaum@biac.org).

BIAC Chairman Speaks to Coparmex Annual Meeting in Oaxaca, Mexico

BIAC Chairman Charles P. Heeter addressed the Annual Meeting of BIAC's Mexican Member Coparmex, in Oaxaca City Mexico, on 26 October on a panel together with Coparmex President, Mr. Gerarado Gutierrez Candiani, BIAC Executive Board Member Mr. José Ignacio Mariscal, and Mr. José Antonio Ardavin, Director of the OECD Mexico Centre. The theme of the Coparmex General Assembly meeting was "Mas Exigencia Ciudadana, Mejor Democracia" which translates to "Strengthening Citizen Engagement for More Effective Democracy."

In context of the Coparmex meeting theme, the BIAC-OECD-Coparmex Panel emphasised the value and importance of Mexican Business engagement via Coparmex and BIAC in the overall OECD process. Coparmex engagement with OECD through BIAC and the Mexican Delegation to OECD is an important means for business to contribute to the development of good public policy in Mexico.

OECD highlighted key messages from the Spring 2011 OECD Economic Survey of Mexico. In particular for business there are recommendations for structural reforms necessary to stimulate growth in Mexico, including regulatory policy for establishing business, taxation, competition social policy and education.

In 2012, Coparmex will play an important role in co-ordinating business input to the G20 under the Mexican Presidency, which officially began in December 2011. The G20 Leaders meeting in Mexico is scheduled to take place in Los Cabos in June 2012.

For further information on BIAC's work with Coparmex, please contact Nicole Primmer (primmer@biac.org).



BIAC Chairman Charles P. Heeter addressing the Annual Meeting of BIAC's Mexican Member Coparmex, in Oaxaca City Mexico

Foto:Max Núñez

BIAC Speaks to G20 on priorities for youth employment

BIAC and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) delivered key business priorities for youth employment to the G20 Task Force on Youth Employment, which held its first meeting on 15 December in Mexico City.

Dr. Ronnie Goldberg, BIAC ELSA Chairman, and IOE Vice President for North America, led the business delegation and emphasised the need for comprehensive and pragmatic policies to enhance youth employability. Active and inclusive labour market programmes for young people and youth entrepreneurship are priority areas that should be a focus of the Task Force work. BIAC's Mexican and French Member Organisation, Coparmex and MEDEF respectively, were also in the business delegation to provide perspective from the host country business community and continuity from the B20 process co-ordinated by MEDEF in 2011.

The G20 Task Force on Youth is an outcome of the G20 process under the French Presidency, in response to an ongoing dilemma of high youth unemployment, increasingly worsened by the continued global economic crisis.

As recent OECD and ILO studies show, high youth unemployment can have significant negative social and economic consequences. Persistent high school dropout rates, skills mismatches and unsuccessful school-to-work transitions, rigid labour markets, and labour market duality for youth are some of the main factors contributing to this phenomenon.

BIAC and Coparmex will work jointly with IOE to coordinate business engagement to this Task Force and the overall G20 Labour process under the Mexican Presidency. For further information, please contact Nicole Primmer (primmer@biac.org).

Active and inclusive labour market programmes for young people and youth entrepreneurship are priority areas that should be a focus of G20 Task Force work.

Implementation of the updated OECD MNE Guidelines

With the 2011 update of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises an important instrument for corporate responsibility has been strengthened.

The Guidelines are the most comprehensive non-binding code of responsible business conduct, and cover the areas of disclosure, human rights, employment and industrial relations, environment, bribery, consumer interest, science and technology, competition and taxation. Their success will to a large extent depend on their effective implementation and on business' activities to raise awareness and incorporate the Guidelines in their own codes of conduct.

In this context, the Confederation of German Employers (BDA) and the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW) – both BIAC members – developed a brochure in order to familiarise enterprises with the Guidelines' recommendations and the National Contact Point procedure.

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OECD MNE Guidelines (continued from page 5)

The brochure addresses major issues, e.g. due diligence and avoiding adverse impacts, in Q&A format and can be downloaded from the BIAC website www.biac.org/mne_guidelines.htm.

VNO-NCW also co-organised and hosted a Conference on Responsible Business Conduct in a Global Context in The Hague on 12 December 2011. The conference focused on two significant developments in the field of corporate responsibility, namely the OECD MNE Guidelines and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Both texts are the result of long processes in which business and other stakeholders were actively engaged. It is a great success that they did not result in new legal obligations for companies and maintained the necessary flexibility for business. However, despite them being "soft law", participants recognized the growing importance of corporate responsibility issues with regard to business' "license to operate" in society.

The publication and the conference are good examples of how business is actively involved in the implementation of the updated Guidelines.

The success of the Guidelines will also to a large extent depend on their ability to contribute to a global level playing field for business. BIAC will thus continue to urge OECD to undertake determined efforts to encourage emerging markets to adhere to the Guidelines.

For further information, please contact Tabea Kölbel at the BIAC Secretariat (koelbel@biac.org).

BIAC meets with Indonesian Observer, Kadin

BIAC Executive Board members, Mr. Guy de Panafieu and Mr. Niels Nordgaard, led a meeting on 28 November in Paris with delegates from BIAC's Indonesian Observer, Kadin. This was the first face-to-face BIAC-Kadin meeting since Kadin joined as a BIAC Observer on 1 April 2011.

Mr. John A. Prasetio (previously Kadin Board Member and now a member of the President's National Economic Council), Ms. Katharine Grace (BIAC's main contact point for Kadin), as well as several other Indonesian colleagues and researchers, discussed how to strengthen BIAC-Kadin cooperation. BIAC looks forward to Kadin representatives gradually stepping up their participation in BIAC policy groups.

Please contact Jonathan Greenhill (greenhill@biac.org) for further information.

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