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## ANNOUNCEMENT

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### THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT 1985

Air pollution, water pollution, noise, toxic chemicals and hazardous waste risks need further curbing and water, land, forest and wild life resources need better management according to a new survey on the environment by the OECD. The survey will be submitted to Environment Ministers at their meeting at OECD headquarters in Paris on June 18th–20th, 1985.

The report lauds progress made in the past 15 years in cleaning up rivers, city air, municipal wastes and protecting beauty spots. Among the remaining black spots, the survey notes:

- air pollution from the yearly emission of 55 million tonnes of sulphur oxides, 37 million tonnes of nitrogen oxides, and 38 million tonnes of hydrocarbons in OECD countries is still a health risk and affects ecosystems;
- millions of households are still without access to waste water treatment facilities;
- intense traffic noise is the lot of 110 million people daily in OECD countries;
- hazardous wastes moved within and between countries (more than 100 000 border crossings a year) and existing toxic chemicals as a health and environment hazard, are growing problems;
- other potential problems, on a global scale, arise from the possible impacts of chlorofluorocarbons on the ozone layer and of increases in concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere on climate.

The extent of environmental progress and the problems remaining vary on OECD countries—for example, more than 65 per cent of the population in

the USA, France, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom and less than 35 per cent in Japan, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain are served by waste water treatment. And high road traffic noise levels (over 65dBA a day) affect about 19 million people in North America, 38 million in Pacific countries, and 53 million in Europe.

The report tracts new environmental problems including the transfer of pollutants between land, air and water, 'new' pollutants such as a number of organic compounds, the degradation of natural resources (ground water, soil, tropical forests, wild life resources), and the risks of energy-related or industry-related environmental accidents.

The report takes stock of the latest pressures imposed by agricultural practices on the environment; including pollution of surface water and groundwater by nitrogenous fertilizers and pesticides, and soil degradation relating to changing agricultural practices.

And, resulting partly from the impact of the material demands of the OECD economies, there are issues that affect the developing world. They are important too for the OECD countries for they relate to the substantiability of the resource base of economic development and to North-South relations.

The OECD's 'State of the Environment' report is published together with a companion volume, the first of its kind, of internationally comparable environmental statistics.

Journalists may obtain copies of the reports from the OECD Press Division, 2 rue Andre-Pascal, 75775 Paris, Cedex 16, France.