“Argentina in the OECD” Forum and “OECD-G20 Retreat”, Buenos Aires

On 15 November, the OECD Chief of Staff and Sherpa, Gabriela Ramos, attended the “Argentina in the OECD” International Forum in Buenos Aires. She participated in the Partners for Development session, alongside Mr Nicolás Dujovne the Treasury Minister; and Ms Carolina Stanley, the Minister of Social Development. Ms Ramos talked about the co-operation between the OECD and Argentina and how it could be reinforced by Argentina’s accession to the Organisation. She also outlined numerous benefits for countries joining the OECD including: making use of knowledge acquired through more than 50 years in the implementation of structural reforms; learning from the experiences and best practices of OECD members; participating in the establishment of new international norms; and influencing public policy debates at the global level. Lastly, Ms Ramos underlined the OECD’s support for Argentina’s reform agenda; specifically, in 2016 an “Action Plan” was developed focusing on 16 areas of public policies with the aim of supporting reforms to promote inclusive growth. Ms Ramos also led the OECD-G20 “Retreat” alongside the Argentinian G20 Sherpa, Mr Pedro Villagra.

During her visit to Buenos Aires, Ms Ramos also held bilateral meetings with the Chief of Cabinet of Ministers of the Argentina Nation, Mr Marcos Peña; the Minister of Social Development, Ms Carolina Stanley; and the Treasury Minister; Mr Nicolás Dujovne. Their discussions focused on economic growth and the progress on structural reforms.

OECD Conference and Ministerial Meeting “Towards Inclusive Social Protection Systems”, Asunción

On 16 November, Ms Ramos travelled to Asunción, Paraguay, to open, alongside the Paraguayan President, his Excellency Horacio Cartes, the Conference and Ministerial Meeting of the OECD LAC Regional Programme on social inclusion: “Towards Inclusive Social Protection Systems in Latin America and the Caribbean”. During her visit, Ms Ramos also launched the OECD publication “Enhancing Social Inclusion in Latin America: Key Issues and the Role of Social Protection Systems” (Read the publication here). In her keynote speech, she noted that there is a dual economy in the region; while a productive and prosperous Latin America thrives, large segments of the population are left behind and many opportunities remain out of their reach. In addition, Ms Ramos highlighted that important challenges for social inclusion still exist in Latin American countries, including informalism, gender inequality, unequal redistribution and the need for better quality education and health. As such, LAC countries should focus on implementing structural reforms in order to improve and expand social inclusion.

Bilateral Meetings in Paraguay

While in Paraguay, Ms Ramos also held a number of bilateral meetings with high-level officials, including the President of Paraguay, Mr Horacio Cartes; the Minister of Finance, Ms Lea Giménez; the Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Mr Guillermo Sosa; the Minister of Planning, Mr. José Molinas; Ms Ramos also met with the Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Security of Costa Rica, Ms Nancy Marín; and the Vice-Minister of Social Policies and Evaluation of Peru, Ms María Eugenia Mujica de San Martín.

5th Steering Group Meeting of the OECD LAC Regional Programme, Asunción

On 17 November, Ms Ramos opened the 5th Steering Group Meeting of the OECD LAC Regional Programme with Minister José R. Molinas Vega, the Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of Technical Planning of Economic and Social Development of Paraguay. In her welcoming remarks, Ms Ramos stressed that while the pace of economic growth is picking up substantially in Latin America and the Caribbean, the region also faces a triple socio-economic challenge: overcoming the middle-income trap; consolidating the middle class; and reinforcing the social contract. In Latin America, the top 20% earn 11 times more than the bottom 20%, compared to 5 times more in OECD countries. To overcome these challenges, three priorities have been set by the OECD LAC Programme: increasing productivity, enhancing social inclusion and strengthening institutions and governance. Lastly, Ms Ramos also stressed the need for deepening regional dialogue, regional partnerships and regional integration in the LAC region.