Mission to Madrid, Spain
On 28-29 March, the OECD Chief of Staff and Sherpa, Ms Gabriela Ramos, was in Madrid, Spain, to participate in the seminar organised by the OECD and Fundación Ramón Areces: “Understanding the Economy and how to make it Work Better for People”. In her opening remarks, Ms Ramos highlighted that economic models which are solely based on inputs such as GDP, fail to capture the distributive consequences of policies, as well as the depletion of natural heritage and the damage done to the environment. She stressed the need for new analytical frameworks and a new narrative that is centred on people’s well-being. Ms Ramos also underlined the importance of measures that strengthen business dynamism, competition and innovation; as well as the need for quality jobs and an effective social dialogue.

Launch of the study ‘Under Pressure: The Struggling Middle Class’, New York
On 10 April, Ms Gabriela Ramos launched the report “Under Pressure: The Struggling Middle Class” at a joint OECD/UNDP event in New York. During the launch, Ms Ramos stressed that a strong and prosperous middle class supports healthy economies and societies. In recent years however, the middle class in OECD countries has come under pressure and has faced numerous challenges such as: perceptions of an unfair system; an increase in living costs and expenses; and labour market instability. Looking ahead, Mr Ramos outlined a number of recommendations made by the report in order to support the middle class, including: adapting the tax and benefit systems; encouraging targeted grants and financial support for loans; and promoting a wider range of learning opportunities from early childhood education to vocational education.

UNICEF Generation Unlimited Board Meeting, Washington DC
On 11 April, Ms Gabriela Ramos participated in the UNICEF Generation Unlimited Board Meeting, in Washington DC. During her intervention, Ms Ramos stressed that youth empowerment is a key pillar for inclusive growth and praised the work of UNICEF Generation Unlimited in promoting the right policy ecosystem for youth to fulfil their potential. Ms Ramos also stressed that the OECD strongly encourages the diversification of curricula to adapt education beyond cognitive skills, while promoting and pursuing innovation through its Jobs and Skills Strategies.

Meeting with Kelly Ann Shaw, US Sherpa to the G20
On 12 April, Ms Gabriela Ramos held a bilateral meeting with the newly appointed US Sherpa to the G20, Ms Kelly Ann Shaw. During their meeting, Ms Ramos emphasised US-OECD common interests such as modernising the rules of a fair and reciprocal economic order with like-minded partners and strengthening the rule of law. Their meeting also focused on the work that the G20 is carrying out under the Japanese presidency, notably on AI, the tax challenges of digitisation, the global economic outlook, gender, infrastructure and anti-corruption.

On 15 April, Ms Gabriela Ramos delivered opening remarks at the New Approaches to Economic Challenges (NAEC) Conference on “New Analytical Tools and Techniques for Economic Policymaking”. In her remarks, she stated that in order better understand how the economy works, it should not be treated in isolation from other complex systems that it interacts with and depends on, notably the environment and social systems. She added that this would imply developing a new framework that would integrate the economy – and economics – with a range of other activities, insights and approaches to help tackle challenges such as climate change, immigration, and inequality that dominate the policy agenda. Looking ahead, she stated that this would require theoretical debate, institutional change, new tools and methodologies. Crucially, it would also require leadership to bring about change and to present a clear picture of what that change would be.

Prepared at OSG by the Speechwriting and Intelligence Outreach Unit (SWINT)