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Statsminister Kåre Willochs middagstale på Akershus Slott for OECDs generalsekretær, Jean-Claude Paye, 20. februar 1985.

Mr. Secretary, Your Excellency,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to host this dinner in your honour, Mr. Secretary General, on your first visit to Norway after having assumed the post as head of the OECD-secretariat in Paris. The Norwegian Government considers the OECD to be ^{of} the utmost importance in the ever more crucial field of economic cooperation between the industrial societies of the Western World.

Your organization can already claim a place in history, in the successful history of the postwar reconstruction and development of Western Europe, economically and politically - two fields which can never really be separated. It is a tribute to the competence and relevance of the OECD that the organization still plays a central and perhaps even more sophisticated role in the economic interaction of its member-countries. The challenges differ of course from those of the early post-war periode. Today we need the OECD's high-quality analyses of economic and social developments, as a basis for consultation and for the policy recommendations we expect from your organization. You yourself, Mr. Secretary

General, have described the aim of the OECD as being to seek out and implement ways of reducing uncertainty. I can assure you that you have the full support of the Norwegian Government in your efforts towards this end.

A number of important problems remain unresolved in the field of intergovernmental economic cooperation. I feel, however, that it is also fitting to point to the undeniable economic upturn, without renewed inflationary pressure, which we are now experiencing in the OECD-area. Economic growth in the OECD-area last year was the most rapid since 1976, inflation the lowest since 1972, and employment rose by 5 million - the largest increase since 1979. At the same time, unemployment in Western Europe remains at a level which is unacceptably high and which is still slowly raising. This may indicate that the measures adopted so far by governments and private organizations are either not stringent enough or they have not been sufficiently coordinated.

In Europe we are in general need of stronger measures to improve the functioning of markets, combined with a change in human attitudes towards accepting greater individual responsibility, more adaptation, increased personal initiative, and a reduction of the role of the State and its bureaucracy in the economy. It is my view that we are confronted by problems that are basically of a political nature: The ability of democratic governments, which are increasingly exposed to popular sentiment in the new age of mass communication, to

counteract highly organized vested interests which are firmly entrenched in important sections of the population, is in fact being questioned. So is, consequently, the ability of these governments to pursue domestic and international policies designed to promote "the common interest" - which has the consistent support of no other "interest group" than the governments themselves. I have no doubt that the long-term well-being of individuals and states would be greatly served by placing more emphasis on their genuine "common interests".

Similar thoughts, Mr. Secretary General, were also expressed in the memorandum which the Norwegian Government - later supported by its four Nordic partners - presented to your predecessor in January 1983, arguing in favour of a greater role for the OECD in strengthening the economic cooperation between governments. Developments during the last two years have not reduced the need for such cooperation. On the contrary: Economic interdependence has increased, without any corresponding growth ⁱⁿ international economic cooperation.

We would today appreciate some reassurance concerning the medium- and long-term policies of the United States. It cannot be considered a normal situation that the richest country on earth imports capital to the amount of annually 100 billion US-dollars, thus transforming itself into a debtor country. Lower deficits would contribute to lower interest rates and thus to an easing of the still unresolved debt-problem of the developing countries. This might also result in a more predictable

currency situation. Furthermore, an important element in any strategy for strengthening economic growth would have to be coordinated efforts by all countries to reduce protectionism and to grant the developing countries a more prominent role in the world economy.

Mr. Secretary General, we share the opinion that OECD should seek out and implement ways of reducing uncertainty. We assume that one of Norway's most significant contributions towards reducing international uncertainty is going to be in the field of energy-supply. Our intention is to explore and gradually develop the oil- and gas-reserves which are being discovered along the Norwegian coast and right up into the Arctic Ocean. As an integral part of the stable political and economic relations which we have developed with our OECD-partners during the postwar period, the Norwegian Government promotes a broad network of relations in the field of energy - placing a premium, to borrow a popular expression from the oil-spotmarket, on the reliability and the predictability of the buyer as well as the supplier. We intend to pursue an energy-policy in the mainstream of Western political and economic cooperation, emphasizing the long-term perspectives as well as the firm intention of the Government that Norway should not be a price-leader, neither in a falling nor a booming market.

Mr. Secretary General, in your address to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on January 31 this year, you expressed the conviction that the present situation calls for a broad

range of complementary action.

The Norwegian Government fully supports such action. The OECD is an organization which is well suited for discussions and further analysis and identification of the proper action to be pursued. This means that the OECD should - on behalf of the Member Governments - identify the major problem areas and policy directions in the light of the extensive international economic linkages. I take this opportunity to emphasize that, as pointed out in the Aide Memoire presented to you earlier today, the Norwegian Government would like to encourage you, in your capacity of Secretary General of the OECD, to present to the Member Governments recommendations regarding future action on your part. This would be in keeping with the objectives, the previous achievements and the best traditions of the OECD.

The coordination of the interests and ideas of more than twenty member countries requires a steady hand and a wealth of professional experience. We are, therefore, pleased to see you, Mr. Secretary General, at the helm of the organization. We wish you every success.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would now like to propose a toast to the Secretary General of the OECD, Mr. Paye, and to the important organization he so skillfully heads.

Thank you.