Paris, 24 April 2013 – Today, business and policy makers held their first OECD workshop on how to make the agro-food chain greener and more sustainable for all. They agreed that the private sector is the leading driver of agricultural productivity and resource efficiency, but sound policies are necessary pre-requisites in order to realise the full potential of greening the agro-food chain.

The topic of green growth in the food and agriculture sector was at the core of discussions at the first joint international workshop of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC).

The growing challenges facing the sector were addressed, such as climate change, rising demand for food, shifting diets, soil degradation and competing demands for vital resources such as water. These challenges oblige the sector to do more with less – i.e. increase agricultural productivity to meet growing demand, but in a sustainable manner.

“What is needed is a new Green Revolution” highlighted Mr. Padoan, Deputy Secretary General of OECD. This should be designed with technologies that can contribute to an economically efficient farm sector and provide financial viability for farmers, while at the same time improving environmental performance in a way that is acceptable to society.

“This OECD/BIAC workshop has demonstrated that win-win solutions are possible, whereby the private sector can produce, transport, process, stock and sell bigger quantities of high quality food and agricultural products in a more efficient way, while still improving environmental performance,” remarked Horacio González Alemán, Chair of the BIAC Food & Agriculture Committee. “Greening the agro-food chain will only truly work through public-private co-operation and coordination. Policy frameworks are needed in which private sector activities can thrive. The OECD is a global leader in advising governments on where essential policies are needed, and BIAC is delighted to work together with the Organisation in these efforts”.

Participants drew attention to several of these enablers for private sector activity, such as predictable and fact-based policies, promotion of R&D, better education and training, and opening up to trade and investment – all of which can help firms to benefit from business opportunities that will enhance actions to green the agro-food chain.

Founded in 1962 as an independent organisation, the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC) is the officially recognised representative of the OECD business community. BIAC’s members are the major business organisations in the OECD member countries and a number of OECD observer countries.

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