Foreword

The second edition of Government at a Glance is being published at a time when the aftermath of the financial and economic crises that started in 2008 is being felt everywhere. Reforming the financial sector, addressing persistent high unemployment, the lack of economic growth, the volatility of markets, the risk of trade and foreign direct investment restrictions and the increase in migration flows are serious policy challenges of unprecedented scope. The room for manoeuvre in most countries is further reduced through high debt and deficit levels. In fact, the speed, scope and timing of fiscal consolidation are considered by many as crucial for progress in other public policy objectives. Government at a Glance 2011 provides key quantitative and qualitative data that can enable evidence-based decision making as well as help governments plan for the future. It allows for the comparison of government activities, practices and performance across a number of critical dimensions, and helps pinpoint areas that warrant further examination. Chapter II tackles questions about the quality of reforms announced to date in member countries.

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