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GOV/PUMA/M(2003)1



Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Economiques
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

29-Jan-2003

English - Or. English

**PUBLIC GOVERNANCE AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE
PUBLIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Cancels & replaces the same document of 17 January 2003

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26TH SESSION OF THE PUBLIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

30-31 October 2002

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JT00138404

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Introduction and objectives of the meeting

1. Sixty-nine delegates from 29 member countries, as well as from Chile, the European Commission and the Trade Union Advisory Committee, attended the 26th session of the Public Management Committee (PUMA) on 30-31 October 2002 (see Annex). The main objectives of the meeting were to:

- Inform the Committee about the OECD Reform Process and Secretariat restructuring.
- Provide the Committee with an opportunity to make final comments on the 2003-2004 work programme.
- Foster substantive discussion on PUMA's current work through presentation of: the key findings of the E-Government Project; recent work on budgeting for the longer term; the future work programme on modernising government; and the draft guidelines on managing conflicts of interest.
- Learn about country experiences through presentations by various countries on e-government, budgeting for the future, modernisation and managing conflicts of interest.
- Provide a technical opinion on Slovenia's request for observership.

Item 1 - Adoption of the agenda

2. The Chair of the Public Management Committee, Ms. Pia Marconi of Italy, opened the meeting. The agenda was adopted, with the addition of an item on "Other Business" at the end of the second day.

Item 2 - Approval of the Summary Record of the 25th meeting of the Public Management Committee

3. The summary record of the 25th session of the PUMA Committee was accepted as submitted.

Opening remarks by the Chair

4. The Chair welcomed delegates and outlined the main points of the agenda. She noted that the Chairs of the Regulatory Management and Reform and the Human Resources Management Working Parties were participating in this meeting -- and had participated in the previous day's Bureau meeting -- as part of the new practice aimed at enriching communication between the working parties and the Committee. Furthermore, for the first time, the Committee meeting had been organised back-to-back with a working party meeting: the Regulatory Management and Reform Working Party met on 28-29 October 2002.

5. The Chair also welcomed Deputy Secretary-General Richard Hecklinger, who would update the Committee on the status of the OECD reform process and the budget situation.

Item 3 - OECD Reform Process, Secretariat Restructuring and PUMA Programme of Work and Budget 2003-2004*OECD Reform Process*

6. Deputy Secretary-General Richard Hecklinger updated the Committee on the reform and budget process in the OECD, noting that some of the measures taken had in fact been inspired by work in PUMA. OECD has been undergoing continuous reform for over a decade, in part as a result of a shrinking budget envelope. He outlined steps taken over the past year to help in reallocation, but stressed that more fundamental change was needed to give the OECD the necessary flexibility to respond to countries' priorities within tight budget constraints. For 2003-2004, directors have been asked to plan their work programmes on the basis of a 6% cut in budget.

7. Mr. Hecklinger also pointed to the increase in voluntary contributions, and the questions this raised about the nature of OECD in the future, particularly with regards to eventual enlargement of OECD membership. Outreach activities and work with non-members had become increasingly important. While some delegates felt that priority activities should be funded from the central budget rather than voluntary contributions, it was argued that this was not always practical. Delegates also hoped that outreach work would not suffer from the shrinking budget.

Secretariat restructuring

8. The Director of PUMA briefly described the recent restructuring of the Secretariat, including the merger of the Public Management Service with the Territorial Development Service to create the new Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate (GOV). She emphasized that this structural change applied only to the Secretariat: the Committees and their work programmes would remain as they were. However, this merger would help create synergies to the benefit of both committees, who focus on similar governance domains. A proposed joint project for 2003-2004 would draw upon work in the two existing work programmes.

9. Before discussing the work programme, delegates heard a report by George Redling, Acting Chair of the Working Party on Regulatory Management and Reform, on the Working Party meeting held the previous two days. In addition to the peer review of Finland and Norway, participants discussed administrative simplification and ex-post evaluation of regulatory policy. Other areas the Working Party was interested in examining in 2003-2004 included: regulatory governance, independent sectoral regulators, evaluating and reviewing the 1995 OECD Recommendation on Improving the Quality of Regulation, monitoring the implementation of the OECD country reviews, and regulatory reform across levels of government.

10. The Director then briefed the Committee on the recent meeting of Senior Officials from Centres of Government (COG), held in The Hague on 10-11 October. The main topic of the meeting was "the role of the state and its shifting scope in the public/private sector interface", or which roles traditionally held by the state can be entrusted to the private sector, and how. At their next meeting, to be hosted by Spain in 2003, COG officials will discuss public sector modernisation, and how centres of government can draw upon practitioners' insight to cope with a rapidly changing world. Turkey has offered to host the meeting in 2004.

2003-2004 Programme of Work

11. At the last Committee meeting in March 2002, delegates ranked 13 projects according to priority. Based on this ranking exercise, the Secretariat prepared a draft programme of work for 2003-2004 including the highest ranked projects organised around 5 main activities. This programme was approved by written procedure in July. Since July, two significant changes had been proposed. First, following discussions at the meeting of the E-Government Working Group in September, changes had been suggested to the second phase of the Project on the Impact of E-Government. The second change involves the joint project with the Territorial Development Policy Committee (TDPC) mentioned above. The proposed project, on Multi-Level Governance, would fit well into an eventual OECD horizontal project on fiscal federalism. The Secretariat had already consulted with the chairs of the two Committees on this proposal, and had provided the Committee with a brief outline of what the project could cover. The activity would have little impact on the budget, as it would be built on ongoing work in the two committees.

12. Delegates welcomed the initial proposal of a joint PUMA/Territorial Development Policy Committee activity on multi-level governance. It was agreed that the Secretariat, after consultation with the TDPC, would prepare a project proposal for submission to the next Committee meeting.

13. Overall, participants supported the draft programme of work, noting that it was rich and ambitious. They also appreciated closer links with the various working parties, and remarked that briefings by the chairs of the working parties were useful in providing a more complete overall picture of the work. Linkages and potential synergies among the activities were noted, particularly between Governing for Performance and Modernising Government, between some aspects of E-Government and Regulatory Reform, and between Improving Accountability and Governing for Performance.

14. Several aspects of the activity on regulatory reform were discussed. First, one delegate remarked that the 1995 recommendations were still challenging and relevant, so a complete overhaul might not be necessary. The Committee agreed that monitoring countries that had undergone the review process could be very interesting. Participants also discussed plans to have the country reviews funded by full cost recovery in the future; it was pointed out that this new funding policy would prevent some countries from undertaking a review. Finally, the Committee endorsed the transformation of the Ad Hoc Group on Regulatory Reform into a Special Group on Regulatory Policy, with a clear mandate and sunset clause.

15. The Committee agreed to cut the project on risk management in the event of a budget reduction; this project had received the lowest priority ranking among the projects retained for the draft work programme.

16. In terms of contributions to horizontal programmes, work on policy coherence could contribute to the programme on sustainable development, but would require financial support from the Secretary-General as it is not a part of PUMA's programme of work. In addition, work on transparency, accountability and prevention of corruption could provide a complement to the horizontal Anti-Bribery programme.

Item 4 - Presentation by the Trade Union Advisory Council (TUAC)

17. At the last session of the Committee, it was decided to invite TUAC to make a presentation of its activities as a first step to developing a closer relationship between PUMA and TUAC. Delegates heard a presentation by Roy Jones and Mike Waghorne that outlined TUAC's activities and highlighted several areas where its input could add value to PUMA work on an ad hoc basis (e.g. conflict of interest, the fight against corruption, modernisation and regulatory reform). The Secretariat will help identify specifically how TUAC can contribute to certain projects, and invites working parties to discuss relevant projects

directly with TUAC. Consultations between TUAC and the Bureau will continue to be held before the Spring Committee meetings.

Item 5 - The Impact of E-Government

18. Following substantial input from three project seminars held in 2002, the Secretariat is preparing two major reports for publication in 2003: a flagship report on e-government and a pilot study of e-government in Finland.

19. The Secretariat provided a brief update on the project and presented the preliminary conclusions of the draft flagship report. Main findings include a need for greater collaboration among government departments, as well as a need for action to remove barriers to e-government, to facilitate the protection of privacy and the exercise of accountability, and to measure demand, benefits, capacity and progress.

20. Ms. Katju Holkeri of Finland presented the pilot study of e-government in Finland. She emphasized that the pilot study had been a positive experience for Finland, allowing reflection on e-government with a longer-term perspective. The peer reviews by Mexico and Australia had been very useful. The main challenge will be to ensure that the results reach high-level policymakers.

21. In the discussion, delegates expressed overall satisfaction with the work carried out thus far. They stressed that the project should look at practical aspects of e-government, and include information on the problems and difficulties encountered by countries. The limitations of e-government also need to be recognised: it will not transform all government services. The Committee agreed with the focus on governance rather than technical aspects of e-government, and on a medium- and long-term perspective. Delegates noted that it is important that countries integrate e-government into wider government modernisation or reform programmes. Other aspects of interest to countries include looking collaboration among different structures and systems, shared services, and "middleware" and "back office" processes.

22. Following the discussion, Mr. Knut Rexed, Director-General of the Statskontoret in Sweden, spoke about the strategic importance of e-government to good governance, including the core challenges for effective, seamless, efficient and responsive government. He emphasised that e-government was, simply, government: information technology was being used to create a networked administration, to interact with business and citizens in new ways.

23. The Secretariat also presented a revised proposal for the second phase of work on e-government. Delegates were generally in favour of the new proposal, but it was agreed that they would continue to provide comments to the Secretariat for one week, at which time the new programme would be finalised. Countries showed interest in a wide range of topics, not all of which can be covered by the Part I budget; work in some of these areas could potentially be financed by voluntary contributions.

Item 6 - Budgeting for the Longer-Term Future

24. The Secretariat briefly introduced this topic, which had been featured at the recent meeting of the Working Party of Senior Budget Officials. Following this presentation, Mr. Mogens Pedersen, Budget Director in Denmark, commented on the subject. He emphasised that long-term budgets were used for decision-making -- changes in legislation or entitlements, for example -- rather than control. They are not operational, but can be useful to focus attention on upcoming challenges: for example, sustainability of expenditure policies or manpower issues in the public sector. He also briefly described the use of medium- and long-term budgets in Denmark: 3-5- year budgets had been used there for 30 years, and 7-10-year economic frameworks were being used for more long-term planning.

25. Several countries shared their experiences with long-term budget planning, noting that, while it was not a "silver bullet", it could help provide a context or "early warning system" for policy discussions. Long-term frameworks also helped make the administration and policymakers aware of the need to look at the long-term future.

Item 7 - Modernising Government

26. Modernising government is one of the five main activities of the work programme. The Secretariat presented the underlying ideas, recommended approach and proposed programme of work on Reviewing Two Decades of Public Sector Modernisation in OECD Member Countries. The work programme would focus on: governance; a whole-of-government rather than a departmental point of view; major changes over time; and what makes government different from one society to another. For example, different legal frameworks and national characteristics need to be taken into account when tackling modernisation. The Secretariat also sees a need to develop intellectual and analytical tools as well as a comparative base of information.

27. Following the presentation, Linda Gobeil, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet in the Canadian Privy Council Office, described Canada's experience with modernisation efforts. Several initiatives to reform the public service over the past few years have brought about important legislative and institutional changes.

28. Knut Rexed, Chair of the Working Party on Human Resources Management, reported on the recent Working Party meeting, noting that human resources issues were at the core of modernisation, as of any other organisational change and development process. In discussing future work, the Working Party emphasised three aspects of modernising human resources management (HRM): as an integral part of the modernisation process, and as a tool both for modernisation itself and for managing the consequences of modernisation. Work on HRM issues should continue to be closely linked to the work on modernisation.

29. The Secretariat paper was very well received. Delegates discussed various aspects of modernisation experiences in their countries. They supported the collection of more empirical data on the subject, and expressed interest in looking at evaluation and assessment of reform, as well as exploring possibilities for peer review. Cultural change; relations among levels of government, for example in federal states; the role of the centre versus that of agencies; and the role of the political level were other areas of interest mentioned.

Item 8 - Modernisation in EU Candidate Countries

30. This session began with a presentation by the Head of the SIGMA Programme. He described the progress of reform in European Union Candidate Countries, noting the major challenges they had faced as well as the significant advances made in the past 12 years. He then suggested areas where OECD countries can learn from the experience of candidate countries.

31. The four candidate countries present (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and the Slovak Republic) briefly described their experiences with reform, including main challenges and next steps. They evoked the social, cultural and institutional contexts that needed to be addressed in order to tackle public administration reform. Delegates found this agenda item very interesting, and agreed that much could be learned from the impressive modernisation efforts of transition countries, and that there were valuable links to be made between the PUMA work programme and the work undertaken in SIGMA. In response to questions concerning the future of SIGMA work after the candidates join the EU, the Secretariat noted that the European Commission was planning to extend the arrangements for both monitoring and supporting

institutional development in candidate countries, and the that current programmes were scheduled to continue until 2006. SIGMA is trying to build on the candidates' experience for assisting the Balkans and other countries, and will continue to work with candidate countries to the extent that the EC and the countries themselves wish it to.

Item 9 - Managing Conflicts of Interest in the Public Service

32. Last year, the OECD launched a survey of all member countries on managing conflicts of interest in the public service. The results led to the Draft OECD Guidelines for Managing Conflicts of Interest in the Public Service, which were discussed at an expert meeting in April 2002 and sent to countries for comment. The Guidelines consist of two major parts: one on policy design, including key measures for developing or reviewing a strategy; and one on policy implementation. The Committee was asked to review the Draft Guidelines as well as the draft comparative report and country case studies.

33. After the Secretariat's presentation, Ms. Lynne Tacy, Deputy Public Service Commissioner in Australia, described her country's experience with managing conflicts of interest in the public service. She outlined relevant aspects of the Australian Public Service (APS) Act, APS Values, and codes of conduct. She also discussed the Guidelines on Official Conduct of Commonwealth Public Servants, which were to be released in a revised version in late 2002.

34. Delegates praised the Secretariat for its work, and welcomed the draft guidelines as a helpful tool for reviewing existing solutions and developing new strategies. They agreed to consider, at their next meeting, whether to submit the Draft Guidelines to Council for endorsement as a Council Recommendation, once some fine-tuning of the text regarding definitions and scope had been completed. Many countries stressed that the Guidelines should be principles-based and not prescriptive. Further written feedback will be gathered and shared with Committee members by early December, and a revised draft will be circulated before the next meeting in April 2003.

35. Participants also described recent developments and challenges in their own countries regarding managing conflicts of interest. The issue of "whistleblowers" was raised as a topic on which countries would like to learn from others' experiences. In terms of future work, participants supported focusing on performance measurement and evaluation.

Item 10 - Request for Observership in the PUMA Committee by Slovenia

36. Slovenia had made a request to the OECD Council to be granted the status of observer to the PUMA Committee and its working parties. The Council accordingly asked the Committee to provide a technical opinion on this request, based on two criteria:

1. whether Slovenia is a major player in field of public management; and
2. whether there is a mutual interest between Slovenia and the Committee.

The Secretariat had prepared a proposed technical opinion on Slovenia's request, which the Committee was asked to discuss and either approve, amend or reject.

37. Delegates responded favourably to Slovenia's request for observership, and agreed to approve the positive technical opinion, which the Secretariat would transmit to Council. The United Kingdom considered that Slovenia's application did not fully meet the required criteria, but did not block the consensus of the Committee.

Item 11 - Committee Bureau Elections

38. The Chair reminded the Committee that Jonathan Breul, a long-serving, active and dedicated member of the Committee who had served on the Bureau since March 1999, had left the public service, and thanked him for his valuable contribution. His departure meant that there was now an empty place on the Bureau. Furthermore, the Bureau had discussed the possibility of enlarging the body, believing that a larger, stronger Bureau could be beneficial to the Committee. Therefore, the Chair announced two places open on the Bureau. Countries were invited to nominate candidates for Bureau membership.

39. Three nominations were received: Canada, France and Sweden. Nominations will remain open until the end of 2002. If the number of nominations exceeds the number of places, consultations will be held to determine the final composition of the Bureau.

Item 12 - Other Business

40. The Secretary-General had recently requested that Committees develop specific guidelines to deal with technical opinions on requests for observership. The Secretariat will draft a set of proposed guidelines for applying the two criteria to requests for observership on the PUMA Committee and its subsidiary bodies. These draft guidelines will be submitted to the Committee for approval at the next meeting in April.

41. The Chair informed the Committee that Brazil and Chile's observership status had been renewed for a further two years via written procedure.

ANNEX

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