

Focus

This newsletter is prepared by the Public Management Service (PUMA) with the guidance of the Public Management Committee of the OECD. It appears quarterly: March, June, September, December.

Building a dynamic economy for the future Symposium in Tokyo discusses regulatory reform

"Reform requires a mix of boldness and caution, and a strong degree of practicality. Both political will and political skill are important. Reform will not happen overnight -- but the time is past for lengthy debates about whether reform is needed. Now is the time for action."

With these words, Donald Johnston, the Secretary-General of the OECD, ended his keynote address at the symposium. This event, held on 2 December, was co-sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry of Japan, the *Keidanren* (Japan Federation of Economic Organisations), and the OECD. Under the direction of Deputy Secretary-General

Joanna Shelton, PUMA is co-ordinating an OECD-wide project on regulatory reform.

What was the purpose?

The symposium examined the regulatory reform experiences of OECD countries. What has happened? Results? Benefits and costs? How can governments assure citizens of the benefits of reform, while managing the short-term pain of change? Why is regulatory reform increasingly important? The symposium underlined the fact that reform can produce important concrete benefits, the costs of non-action are likely to be more painful, and negative effects of reform can be managed. However, a number of specific actions are now needed to move reform forward.

Impressive participation

Some 600 participants attended the symposium. The majority of these were Japanese business representatives. Journalists and representatives from foreign embassies in Tokyo also attended. Among the 30 speakers were government officials, academics, senior people from the private sector and trade unions, both Japanese and non-Japanese.

The event was opened by the Japanese Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of International Trade and Industry. The Chair of *Keidanren* also made a welcoming speech followed by Mr. Johnston's keynote address.

Comprehensive coverage

The meeting was structured around three themes:

Citizens at the centre

When introducing private sector management methods — even modified — into government, could we fall prey to an excess of streamlining, competitiveness and productivity, and thus end up adding to disillusionment in our society? Could this disillusionment in fact result from the ineffectiveness of institutions that can provide other goods besides those that satisfy our individual material aspirations, and thus promote the values of justice, solidarity and concern for society's weakest members: that is, values of humanity and good citizenship?

Doesn't the re-emergence of these values depend not only on a more modern management of public services, but also on a more modest one that, as in the private sector, is closely attuned to people's needs?

Jean-Marie Mottoul, Head, ABC Advice Bureau, Federal Ministry of the Public Service, Belgium, and PUMA Delegate

- Results. Regulatory reform can produce concrete benefits for consumers and industries, and stimulate productivity, new business opportunities and innovation.
- Globalisation. Reform is important for international competitiveness, investment and trade policies.
- Strategies for reform. How to move forward? Should reform be broad or targeted? How can vested interests be overcome? How can good regulatory decisions be taken?

Time for action

Joanna Shelton, Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD and Chair of the meeting, concluded: "It seems clear that there is a real need to move forward with greater deregulation and regulatory reform, the sooner, the better." After listing several of the benefits of reform, including stronger macroeconomic performance and competitiveness in global markets, she concluded, "Fundamentally, deregulation and regulatory reform should be seen as an investment in the future."

The OECD will present a major report on regulatory reform to ministers in Spring 1997. ■

Words & Concepts

A few words on regulation and deregulation. In PUMA work, regulation refers to the diverse set of instruments by which governments require that private sector actors behave in specified ways. Regulation can include both legal and informal instruments, such as guidance, that are issued by all levels of government. It can also include rules issued by non-governmental bodies, such as self-regulatory bodies, to whom governments have delegated regulatory powers.

Regulatory reform is used to refer to changes that improve regulatory quality: that is, enhance the performance or reduce the costs of regulations. Deregulation is only a subset of regulatory reform, and refers to complete or partial elimination of regulation in a sector.

National Performance Review Enters its Fourth Year

●A government that works better and costs less

In September 1996 US Vice President Al Gore, who leads the National Performance Review (NPR), presented his third annual report on reinventing government to President Clinton. This report, entitled *The Best Kept Secrets in Government*, revealed the smallest federal workforce in 30 years and savings of \$118 billion. Reinvention principles include putting customers first, cutting red tape, empowering employees to get results, and cutting back to basics.

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Question & Answer

- *An important aspect of the National Performance Review seems to be the full involvement of officials at mid and lower levels. Is this the case? If so, why?*
- From the start, Vice President Gore has asked federal employees for advice and ideas. He staffed the NPR task force with federal managers and employees at many grade levels. Members work from 3 months to a year and return to their agencies with reinvention ideas and experience. Many of the best ideas come from self-directed teams, labour-management partnerships, reinvention labs, and town hall meetings with workers. Vice President Gore tells "every government manager — every government worker, everywhere" to "make it your job to reinvent government".

Jonathan Breul, Senior Advisor to the

●Improved government phone listings

For most Americans, the first contact with government is the phone directory's government "blue pages". Blue pages mostly list government offices, not services. In 1996, NPR began a 3-year project to make listings more user friendly. Hundreds of federal employees are working with about 30 companies that publish the nation's 6 200 phone directories. Soon, more than 18 million households in 10 cities will see improved government listings. As the initiative expands, phone numbers will be organised by services -- "passports", for example, not the "State Department". Listings will also include e-mail addresses and Web sites.

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●Regulatory agencies are partnering with industry

Most companies want to comply with regulations, if they can understand what they are. The Clinton Administration directed regulatory agencies to: cut obsolete regulations and rewrite what is left; reward results, not red tape; negotiate, not dictate; and get out of Washington and form grassroots partnerships. As a result, 35 agencies reviewed 86 000 pages of regulations and got rid of outdated or unnecessary rules. They took a good look at what was left and are rewriting many of them, using plain English.

Regulatory agencies are also realigning their performance systems so that they measure compliance achievement rather than enforcement activity, using consensual rulemaking techniques and forming partnerships that support good players and leverage resources both inside and outside of government.

For example, the Environmental Protection Agency changed its emphasis from cleaning up pollution to preventing it. Since 1992, EPA more than tripled corporate membership in its "Partners for the Environment" program. More than 7 100 companies now participate. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has a new common sense approach. If a company does not have a required poster on display, an inspector hands out the poster, not a penalty. OSHA is also working with companies on long-range prevention of workplace hazards. Companies find other benefits. In six months, one company saw the total cost of worker compensation claims drop from more than \$1 million to \$13 200.

Regulators did not give up their responsibility to enforce the rules and apply stiff penalties if necessary. Since they no longer waste time on the "good guys", they can do a better job going after the cheaters.

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●Federal services on-line

In September, President Clinton announced a new consolidated on-line customer service direct from the White House. Now on-line customers do not have to know the Web address of federal agencies or even what agency delivers the service. Once on the White House home page, they are just one click away from the most "commonly requested federal services". Services are organised by topic, not agency.

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Page Break

Above you will find a new feature of Focus. In each issue we will dedicate one page to a different country, reporting on the way its reform movement is proceeding and providing concrete examples of innovations and

initiatives. We start with the National Performance Review launched three years ago in the United States. It is a comprehensive reform package that introduces ways to provide better service at lower cost.

On page 5 of this issue you will find further information on the Vice President's report, Best Kept Secrets in Government. See page 7 for information on the White House Web site and its address.

●Quality and professionalism

An Action Plan for a Senior Public Service was approved by the **Netherlands** Parliament in October 1996. This confirmed the reform impetus started by the creation of a senior public service (SPS) in January 1995. The SPS will be transformed from a loose collection of civil servants to a team of senior managers capable of helping to raise the professionalism, quality and integrity of the civil service. New aspects of management development will be introduced, building on existing initiatives. Elements in the process include mobility, knowledge intensification, career development instruments, research, and infrastructure. The foundations have been laid in legal status elements and procedure, and now it is time to increase the level of support within the civil service. The investment in people, in mobility and in quality will result in an open, accessible and transparent system to serve government. A special office within the Ministry of the Interior was set up in September 1996 to carry out the Action Plan (see also "From the Bookshelf").

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●Manpower reallocation

The government of **Japan** reallocates manpower while reducing the total number of civil service personnel. The Ninth Personnel Reduction Plan, decided by the Cabinet in July 1996, aims to cut 35,122 positions over the next five years.

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●Revised personnel policy

The **Icelandic** government is committed to improving the efficiency of central government operations at all levels.

In this context, a committee was created in August 1995 to review the government's personnel policy. The aims were to bring the public sector more in line with human resource management practices in the private sector, reduce central control of wage determination and increase the operational responsibility of managers in each institution. Education, seniority, and equal opportunity were other elements taken into account. Through decentralisation and increased flexibility, the central government and its institutions will become "first class" employers. The first phase of the review resulted in a revised Act on Rights and Obligations of State Employees, which took effect in July 1996.

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●Performance appraisal

The **Belgian** public administration has set up a new system for evaluating public servants that includes three new elements. Each person is evaluated every two years. Criteria for evaluation are weighted according to the post. Three interviews take place: one at the start of the two-year period, to agree on the criteria to be applied (the job interview); one to informally prepare the formal evaluation; and the formal appraisal interview itself. Another major innovation is an analytical catalogue of job groupings covering all jobs in the federal public service. For each grouping, job descriptions are proposed, as well as weightings for the various evaluation criteria, each of which is defined by a list of performance indicators. The evaluator adapts these criteria and indicators according to the job in question. Experience so far has shown that the definition of functions and indicators motivates public servants to participate actively in the evaluation exercise.

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●Management development

Since 1992, **Finland** has carried out an active development and training policy for the senior civil service. All 130 of the most senior managers have participated in a National Strategy Development Programme, a think-tank covering all sectors of Finnish society and Finland's role in Europe. The next level of approximately 850 managers and senior experts benefits from a Public Management Development Programme. The three weeks of the programme are devoted to strategic public management, leadership and self-management techniques, and Finland's European strategy. A special training programme for 900 civil servants at all levels has also been launched to prepare for the Finnish presidency of the European Union in 1999. Feedback from the programmes has been positive. The core of the civil service has now been prepared for internationalisation, strategic thinking and change. The next stage will include evaluation of the human resources policy, and an assessment of the effectiveness of management development programmes, including the two programmes mentioned above. There will be a greater focus on reviewing performance and assessing the managerial potentiality and skills of the senior civil service.

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The items published in Focus are taken from the information reported to the PUMA Committee by its members. We make selections among them and produce summaries for Focus.

Unfortunately, we cannot cover them all, due to lack of space. In addition (and we are pleased to report this), officials from various countries have begun to send us information directly.

The fight for space is our major difficulty. But, thanks to the electronic version of Focus, we will be able to offer a wealth of information. See page 7.

In search of results: performance management

Performance management has become a key factor in public management reform. In many OECD countries, focus on results is seen as an important objective. As part of its ongoing work in this area, PUMA analysed, in a comparative setting, performance management developments in ten Member countries. The results of this analysis will be published in early 1997.

All ten countries have for a number of years been active in developing and implementing performance management, and have developed a wide range of performance management approaches and instruments.

Although there is a certain convergence in the way countries manage performance, important differences are observed in the use of instruments. Each country has its own approach, appropriate to its needs and administrative traditions.

The table below summarises the performance management objectives set in the ten countries. The objectives are analysed from three different perspectives:

- internal use for improving management;
- external use for accountability and control; and
- use for budgetary purposes (savings).

Country	Management and Improvement	Accountability and Control	Savings
	Is the internal use of performance management to support management and continuous improvement a major objective?	Is the external use of performance management to increase accountability to responsible ministers or to the public a major	Are direct savings on the budget a major objective?
Australia	→ Improved public sector efficiency and outcomes are important goals, as well as enhancing responsiveness of the public serv-	→	→
Canada	→ Performance management is to ensure flexible management and client-centred	→ New reporting mechanisms aim at improving accountability for performance.	→ Performance management systems are part of an overall strategy to reduce the budget
Denmark	→ The main objectives are to increase management capacities of agencies and focus on clients and service quality.	→ Clear definition of objectives and performance targets are meant to increase ministers' control over policy.	→ Overall savings were an important objective of the former coalition, but the current coalition emphasises reallocation of re-
Finland	→ Performance management is meant to introduce organisational and cultural changes and make the administration more efficient	→	→ The economic crisis in the early 1990s turned the focus to budget reductions rather than performance improvement.
France	→ General improvement in management and especially an improved relationship between management and staff is an impor-	→ Increased accountability for results is a key objective.	→ Better use of resources is a priority in a context of decreasing budgets.
Netherlands	→ Performance management is to foster the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes	→ Accountability is an important objective, especially in the case of agencies.	→ Savings are not a direct objective of performance management, but many pro-
New Zealand	→ Performance management is designed to embed a culture of high performance and	→ Almost all reforms have focused on the need to clarify accountability and responsi-	→ Fiscal responsibility and savings have been important objectives.
Sweden	→ Reforms emphasise management by results, with the overall objective to improve the quality and flexibility of public serv-	→ It is considered important to transform traditional accountability mechanisms, based on detailed controls, to accountability for	→ Improved performance is important to improve the fiscal situation and reduce the budget deficit.
United Kingdom	→ Effective delivery of service to the customer and continuous improvement in	→ Ensuring clear accountability for performance is a central element of "Next Steps"	→ It is considered important to reduce the size of the public sector (public service and
United States	→ The objective of performance management is to transform agencies into lean, flexible	→ Accountability for performance is an important objective.	→ Direct savings are an indirect objective of performance management.

Page Break

In each issue, this page presents a specific experience. This time, the subject is the way countries approach performance management and define its objectives.

The table above summarises one aspect of the findings of a study conducted by PUMA. The table reflects the richness of experience in this field.

This and other findings of the study will be the subject of a forthcoming publication entitled In Search of Results: Performance Management.

New publications from PUMA

Two new PUMA publications came out in December:

- ***Ethics in the Public Service: Current Issues and Practices*** examines how nine countries manage ethics and conduct in the public service. It also defines elements of an effective "ethics infrastructure".
- ***Performance Auditing and the Modernisation of Government*** considers the relationship between performance auditing and public sector modernisation, and the extent to which performance auditing can improve the performance of public sector organisations.

Forthcoming PUMA Publication

Performance Pay Schemes for Public Sector Managers: An Evaluation of the Impact will be published in late February.

The latest issue of SIGMA's PMF

As reported in the September issue of *Focus*, SIGMA publishes *Public Management Forum (Tribune de la Gestion Publique* in French), a bi-monthly newsletter on public administration reform in Central and Eastern Europe. Vol. II, No. 4 — published in December — concentrates on ethics and corruption in the public service:

- **Hungary's** new plan for the reform of its public administration.
- Proposed directions for EUROSAI with Central and Eastern European State audit offices -- an article by Lubomir Volenik, the President of the Supreme Audit Office of the Czech Republic.
- **Estonia's** civil service law and its provisions against corruption, explained by Georg Sootla, Chair of the Political Science Department, Tallinn Pedagogical Institute.
- The role of the journalist in exposing corruption in State institutions, explored by Sándor Orbán, Deputy Director, Centre for Independent Journalism.
- The **World Bank's** efforts against corruption, by Mike Stevens, Chairman of the Task Force on Corruption.
- Bringing light to corruption in government world-wide, the work of Transparency International, described by its Chairman, Peter Eigen.

If you want to receive a free copy of this newsletter, send:

- a fax to **33.1 - 45.24.13.00**, or
- an e-mail to **francoise.locci@oecd.org**

You can also consult it at the PUMA Web site: <http://www.oecd.org/puma/sigmaweb/newsltr.htm>.

Government Publications

Government programme to improve law drafting

The **Finnish** Council of Ministers approved a programme to improve the law drafting process. It covers various aspects of regulatory management: how to take law drafting into account during operational planning, forecasting the impact of proposals, arranging for hearings, etc. The Ministry of Justice published this programme in autumn 1996 as a booklet both in English and French.

Link

The **Irish** Government launched a major programme for change in the civil service called *Delivering Better Government*. It sets out plans for a strategic management initiative. **Link** is its newsletter, published quarterly. It provides information on the progress being made, and reports on initiatives undertaken in various departments and offices. Its first issue (Winter 1996) covers recent experiences of 31 units.

Action Plan for a Senior Public Service

This action plan, approved recently by the **Dutch** Parliament, describes how the senior public service will develop in the future. Its aim is to indicate the desired course of development rather than give a blueprint of measures to be taken. The plan looks at the position and scope of the senior service, and lists the elements of the development process. The plan is published in English by the Office for the Development of the Senior Public Service.

Best Kept Secrets in Government

This report by **United States** Vice President Al Gore, presented to President Bill Clinton, gives a detailed account of the progress made under the National Performance Review (NPR). Three years ago, 833 specific actions were defined. It is reported that 43 per cent of these actions are complete; others are in progress. The report explains what was done and explores future challenges. It also contains reports from 25 federal departments and agencies. It is on sale and also available on the Internet at <http://www.npr.gov>.

Better Service, Better Value, Better Management

This progress report of the Efficiency Board to the Secretary-General of the **United Nations** provides information on how the UN is trying to improve its cost-effectiveness. While recognising that there is still much to do, it outlines proposals to develop a stronger and more effective management structure.

Page Break

Governments are also publishers, producing interesting reports and documents. As stressed here, some governments even go so far as to make their documents available in other languages.

~~Some of these publications are available free of charge and others are for sale.~~

~~If you wish to obtain copies of free publications, please send us a message with the titles you require.~~

~~We will transmit your request to~~

~~officials in the relevant countries and see whether they have copies available to be sent to you. We hope that this will be a useful column, and will continue to have it as a permanent feature in Focus.~~

● **Governance project making headway**

The Ministry of Finance in **Finland** set up a committee in May 1996 to work out a strategy for governance of the public sector. Four working groups were then created in October to make proposals for the reform process in four areas. Changes will be proposed for the organisation and functioning of the Council of State, which consists of the Prime Minister and all 17 ministers. The group on "ownership-based management" will study the best way to organise the increasing number of State functions that are run along commercial lines. Accession to the European Union and public sector restructuring call for improvements in external supervision, internal auditing and evaluation of public operations. Finally, proposals will be made for a system of checks and balances between the Council of State and the Social Security Institution. These four areas represent just some of the challenges facing Finland as a result of EU membership, globalisation trends and other recent changes in the public administration and the entire public sector. The committee and working groups will help define official government positions on public management policy for a report to Parliament in 1998. The aim is to equip the public sector to meet the 21st century.

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● **Strategic savings plan**

The budget deficit in **Austria** has increased significantly in the past five years. In relation to GDP, it has grown from 2.8 per cent in 1992 to 4.9 per cent in 1995. In response to this pressure, the government has defined a strategic savings plan at the political level. A goal has been set of 4 per cent savings within two years at the federal level, representing a reduction of 11,000 posts in the public service. Overall personnel costs for the public service for 1996 and 1997 will be kept at 1995 levels. There will be no salary increases in the public sector in 1996 or 1997. And the *de facto* retirement age will be raised from 56 to age 60. This downsizing programme is supported by an administrative management development plan which draws on the comprehensive Administrative Management Project (1989-1994).

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● **Public management reform**

A major reform programme was launched in **Greece** in 1995, as part of the Second Community Support Framework of the European Union. In 1996, the Programme for Greek Public Administration Modernisation made progress in certain areas. The size of the public sector and of government expenditure is being reduced. Deconcentration and decentralisation are being reinforced, mainly through re-organisation of the regions, for which the relevant draft law is pending a vote in Parliament. Personnel management is becoming more efficient, aided by greater mobility. A new Civil Service Law is being completed. There is more flexibility in management. Concepts of citizen orientation, quality of service and results orientation have been reinforced. Finally, extended use of information technology has brought improvements to the information network of the administration. The momentum is being maintained in all of these areas.

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● **Lean state eases burdens**

The **German** Lean State Advisory Council, created in 1995, has moved swiftly to recommend concrete ways to streamline bureaucracy. A number of its recommendations are already being implemented. An intensified checklist for proposed legal provisions has recently been developed. The principle of subsidiarity guides legislative activity, particularly to build a strong Europe. Common modernisation aims are sought in both national and *Länder* administrations. State functions are to be reduced and federal agencies streamlined. There is a shift from administering public agencies to providing service. Planning and authorisation procedures are accelerated. Statistical work is kept to the strict minimum. Budgeting methods are improved. In the period remaining until the end of its mandate next year, the Council will consider recommendations for the judicial system, for reducing the number of legal standards, for personnel management, and for privatisation. In the interim, the Lean State Advisory Council will hold a congress on "Lean State Rewards the Future-oriented Administration" in the Düsseldorf Congress Center on 19-20 February 1997.

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Focus is mailed to around 5000 addressees. If you received this issue, it means that you are on the mailing list and, in principle, should continue to receive it each quarter. The next issue should reach you in March 1997.

If it does not, please let us know; we are told that there are distribution problems in some post offices. Information on how to contact us is on the back page. We will send you another copy if you do not receive one.

As agreed when Focus was launched, the PUMA Committee will evaluate this initiative at the end of March and decide whether to continue this publication or stop it. We will inform you of the outcome.

● Reinventing government

Major reforms are taking place in **Hungary** as set out in a Government Resolution. Main objectives are to improve the operations of the public administration, "reinvent" government, strengthen local government, and improve personnel management. Many actors will be involved, including the Prime Minister's Office, line ministries, the Hungarian Institute of Public Administration, central and regional units and local self-governments. The detailed programme of reform calls for many specific actions, including reducing and simplifying regulations, improving the preparation and transparency of legislation, simplifying the system of appeals, and making better use of information technology.

The collective nature of government will be strengthened, notably by reducing the number of central government committees and strengthening the political leadership in ministries. The co-ordinating role of the Prime Minister will be reinforced, and his/her executive competence increased. At local level, associations of smaller governments will be encouraged, and tasks will be decentralised to local and county governments with clear lines of authority between them. Personnel management improvements will include: a revised legal system of public service to maintain stability and a uniform civil service; improved selection procedures and systems of remuneration, promotion and evaluation; better training, including annual management training for senior civil servants; a looser hierarchy giving more responsibility to managers; and guiding principles of State personnel policy from the government.

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● Government renewal

The need to balance the books has been one of the most powerful drivers of recent public management change in **Canada**. Fiscal pressure called for a re-thinking of the basic role of the federal government and a search for the most cost-efficient way of delivering programmes and services to Canadians. As part of Program Review (1993-96), a comprehensive review of all government programmes, the government redefined its basic role around 5 sectors of responsibility and set clear priorities. Significant costs savings resulted; for example, from 1998-99 onwards, government costs will be reduced by more than \$9 billion a year.

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From the PUMA Web site

What's new on <http://www.oecd.org/puma/>?

The "What's new" option offers links to new items, for example documents on budgeting practices in Austria and the United States, and *Guidelines for Contracting Out*. There is also a report on the latest regulatory reform meeting.

Focus On-Line, the electronic version of *Focus*

Focus is on the Web, at <http://www.oecd.org/puma/> **focus**. The paper and electronic versions are quite different. In *Focus* we are not able to include all the material we have. *Focus On-Line* will cover more items at greater length. Its production will follow a three-month cycle. The first month, it will give the latest issue of *Focus*. Detailed information on selected items will follow in the second month. The third month will be reserved for reports on recent developments in countries that were not covered in the first month. In another section, material from previous issues will be grouped by country to allow you to follow developments over time.

Governments on the Web

<http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr>

This is the site of the French Prime Minister. It has over 100 pages, including an English version. One popular section is the page containing citizens' views on policies.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov>

This provides useful information on the White House, including "Children's White House". But it also gives direct access to all government services. (See also page 2.)

<http://www.government.de>

This comprehensive government site from Germany has versions in English, French and Spanish. It provides factual information on Germany and its government.

<http://www.canada.gc.ca>

Presented in English and French, this covers various subjects, such as information about Canada, a government overview, federal organisations, programmes and a telephone directory.

<http://www.kantei.go.jp>

The Japanese Prime Minister's site gives his speeches and statements, government papers and reports, statistics and information on Japan. It has an English version. ■

Page Break

As the examples on this page show, governments are becoming more present on the Internet, producing interesting, attractive and comprehensive sites. Some have even translated parts of their sites into foreign languages.

Due to space limitations we could not list all available sites here. But in subsequent issues we will continue to provide information on other sites, including ones in Sweden, Ireland, New Zealand and Hungary.

This issue of Focus was produced by Atila Alpöge, Deirdre Wolfender, Andrea Uhrhammer and Marie Murphy. To contact us, use the addresses on the back page.

Strengthening governance in support of economic and social goals

In October, Public Management Committee met for the fourteenth time. The meeting was marked by various events:

- A keynote speech by **Donald Johnston**, the Secretary-General of the OECD (see below) on the role of the Committee in the Organisation.
- A presentation by **Nicole Jauvin** on the Canadian experience in public management reform, including Program Review and portfolio management. (A summary will appear in the next issue.)
- New participants: **Hungary** as a new Member, and **Korea** and **Poland** as special observers invited to become full Members.

"The role of PUMA is central today"

In his remarks, the Secretary-General underlined the importance of PUMA's work. One of the objectives of PUMA should be to look at "**how governance could be strengthened, in support of economic and social goals**". The success of the free trade agenda, for example, depends upon government brokering among competing interests to ensure that benefits are equitably shared. This depends on effective governance.

The Secretary-General provided a clear vision of the cross-cutting role of the Committee in the future work of the Organisation. He also stressed that governments have to be user-friendly. They should be the instrument of the people, not just the instrument of politicians. "**We have to build much more respect for the public service, something that has been lost to some degree.**"

Survey of Member countries

The PUMA Committee discussed four major reports for publication, including the *Survey of Issues and Developments in Public Management*.

This is a new initiative, building upon the popular *Surveys* published in the early 90s. The new survey particularly looks at government roles, accountability for devolved institutions, and building coherence. These are three issues which

are attracting increased attention.

Managing contracting out

Another report provides a concise set of guidelines on the steps governments should take when considering and managing contracting out. Committee members noted the practicality and usefulness of the document, welcomed the fact that its short format would enhance its value, both to senior officials and the political level, and called for it to be widely disseminated.

Governing at different levels

Another PUMA report looked at the issue of managing across levels of government. The work detected a trend towards devolution, bringing with it a set of new tensions. Delegates confirmed that this is an important issue, but also a difficult one, because of the political nature of the relationship. Future work will focus on strengthening intergovern-

mental mechanisms for co-ordination and collaboration.

Ethics and public service

The Committee noted that this is a topical issue in all countries, and approved a report for publication. It also discussed themes to be covered at a major symposium to be organised in November 1997 on linking ethics to public management reform.

Better communication

The reports approved by the Committee will become PUMA publications. But towards whom should they be directed and how? To reach the appropriate audience, including the political level, other means of communication are needed. In addition to *Focus* and the PUMA Web site, the Committee decided that short policy briefs should be prepared and widely distributed. ■

Excerpts from the Secretary-General's speech

Social progress is very much dependent upon keeping in balance three fundamental elements of a triangular paradigm. One is economic growth. [...] Another is social stability, ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are equitably shared across society. And the third part of that paradigm is political stability. Underlining political stability is very much the issue that you are dealing with: governance. It's the role of the public administration in ensuring that governments have access to policy options and that the general administration of government is solid, sound and secure, and in the best interests of the electorates that governments serve. [...]

I think that governments in general are like computers. The institutions of government, our court system, our parliaments, and so on, are what I would call the hardware of government. The software of government are the politicians that come and go, that bring different policies at different times. But essentially the operating systems of government are the public service, that effectively ensures that, no matter what happens in the political apparatus of the country, the citizenry will continue to be well served. [...]

The role of PUMA today is central to all of this, especially during this period of what economists euphemistically refer to as fiscal consolidation, which means essentially getting deficits down and withdrawing from many areas of traditional government service. It may mean privatisation, or deregulation, or as I prefer to think of it, regulatory reform. But it's very important for you in public management to identify the policy instruments which you must use to guide governments through this very difficult period. ■

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