STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR

22nd Session of the Public Management Committee, Château de la Muette, Paris
30-31 October 2000

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22nd Meeting of the Public Management Committee
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Statement by the Chair

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Promoting good governance . . .

1. As events of the past decade have increasingly shown, the quality of the institutions that support
government policymaking is as important as that of the policies themselves. Good governance is essential
for strengthening democracy; promoting economic prosperity, social cohesion and environmental
sustainability; and maintaining confidence in public institutions.

. . . in a rapidly changing world.

2. National governments are exposed to an increasing array of outside forces. Greater economic
interdependence, new technological developments and the growing importance of international bodies
mean that forces affecting society are more complex, diverse and multi-dimensional than ever before.

3. Many policy issues are becoming increasingly global in nature and need to be addressed
internationally. At the same time, sub-national governments are being given greater autonomy through
decentralisation. Moreover, non-governmental organisations and citizens’ groups have emerged as a
powerful force, both in policy discussions and as providers of services previously left to the state.
Governments must adapt to this changing world.

Developing civil service leaders

4. The Public Management Committee received a briefing on the United Kingdom’s effort to
develop civil service leaders. The ensuing discussion highlighted the recognition by all the working
groups that the pace of change and devolved management have made leadership more critical than ever
and that the need to develop public sector leaders is a key public sector challenge.

Electronic government

5. Committee members welcomed the proposal to include a horizontal project on e-government in
the work programme. They emphasised that the governance opportunities and challenges arising from new
information and communication technologies cannot be ignored and that their impact on public
management issues is truly cross-cutting. They also endorsed the strong message from the recent expert
meeting on risk management of large public IT projects that in the face of unacceptable high failure rate in
such projects across OECD countries, governments have to better manage IT projects if they want to have
any hope of achieving their e-government ambitions.
6. The Committee was briefed on the United States’ FirstGov web portal and the Italian e-government Action Plan. Committee members also raised their own countries’ activities in this area, recognising the pressing need to make public services available on-line. The Third Global Forum on Governance to be held in Naples, 15-17 March 2001, will provide an important opportunity for a further exchange of experiences and good practices.

**Sustainable Development**

7. Committee members were provided an opportunity to review Chapter 4 of the Analytic Report on “Sustainable Development: Institutions and Decision-making for Sustainable Development” which is being prepared for the 2001 meeting of the Council at Ministerial level. The discussion highlighted the need to integrate economic, social and environmental policies and called for renewed attention to improving policy coherence.

**Governance Outreach and Gender Mainstreaming**

8. Deputy Secretary-General Sally Shelton Colby briefed the Committee on PUMA’s work on governance outreach and gender mainstreaming. The Committee was positive about PUMA’s role and accomplishments in leading the horizontal governance outreach programme and looked forward to the continuation of this effort through regional conferences.

9. The Committee expressed strong interest in PUMA’s gender mainstreaming initiative and asked for further work to clarify concepts as well as a draft of proposed projects.

**Work Program and Budget**

10. While the substance of the PUMA programme of work has not changed from the last version approved at the 21st Committee meeting, the Secretariat provided more programme and budget detail and a new presentation that better shows the links to the PUMA mandate. The Committee is pleased to see that the next phase of implementation of the PUMA programme of work is already well underway.

**Argentina, Brazil and Chile**

11. The Committee recommended approving pending applications from Argentina, Brazil and Chile to be “observers” at Committee meetings and to consult with PUMA’s working parties and networks regarding participation as approved observers in their activities.

**Working parties and networks**

12. For the second time at the PUMA Committee, the chairs of the four working parties and networks participated in Committee discussion on PUMA’s work. They commended the closer working relationship among the PUMA Committee and working parties.

13. In response to the new mandate and budget challenges of the future, the Working Party of Senior Budget Officials (SBO) has shifted its work programme to look more towards the future and focus on the coherence of budget development and execution and the links between effective management and good budgeting. The SBO will emphasise the use of modern budgeting practices to deal with future problems.
such as ageing populations and environmental degradation, helping Member states strengthen their focus on outcome management and performance budgeting. In addition, it will prepare best practices in budget transparency and examining the potential and limits of accrual accounting. The SBO also endorsed PUMA’s plan to engage Member country parliaments in a discussion of these modern budgeting issues.

14. The Human Resources Management Working Party has renewed its focus in the light of the PUMA mandate and decided to address leadership, professionalism, knowledge management and critical skills shortages. Developing leadership in the public sector was the main issue at the HRM meeting in July. The working party also agreed on ways to develop the database on the Public Sector Pay and Employment as well as to produce outputs on leadership, knowledge management and recruitment and retention.

15. The Regulatory Management and Reform Working Party has focused not only on tools and practices, but also on government capacities and institutions, at both national and sub-national levels, to produce high quality regulations. After a decade of work and results, it has entered a 2nd phase in its work programme. Today, it is pushing forward on regulatory compliance, administrative simplification activities and the working of new sectoral regulators. It also continues to participate actively in the OECD Regulatory Reform horizontal programme. Overall, it has expanded to cover emerging and related issues in terms of accountability, transparency and efficiency. It has had a concrete influence on regulatory environment and frameworks of many countries, demonstrating the relevance of its work.

16. The network of senior officials from Centres of Government focused on ensuring coherence, e-government and risk management at its recent annual meeting held in Budapest on 6-7 October 2000. For the first time, a meeting was organised back to back under the governance outreach initiative, and representatives of regional non-OECD Members had the chance to gain an insight into the COG work. This innovative session concluded that countries in transition are faced with problems similar to those of OECD Member countries—e-governance, risk management, strategic planning, etc.—though under less stable political and institutional conditions.

Communications

17. The Committee was briefed about steps the Secretariat is taking to implement recommendations of the Committee’s Communications Advisory Group to increase the “influence and impact” of PUMA’s work. The Committee was challenged to assist the Secretariat in assessing and increasing the degree to which PUMA’s work is finding its way into the decision making process of governments.