PUBLIC MANAGEMENT SERVICE
PUBLIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR

23rd session of the Public Management Committee, Château de la Muette, Paris
27-28 March 2001

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23rd Meeting of the Public Management Committee
(27-28 March 2001)
Statement by the Chairman

Mr. Adam Wolf
Deputy Permanent Secretary for Public Management,
Danish Ministry of Finance

Sharing PUMA’s work on good governance

1. Good public governance continues to be a core element of PUMA’s programme of work. The Committee expressed appreciation for the quality and current relevance of a number of recent OECD activities, including the publications, Trust in Government, Government of the Future and the OECD Journal on Budgeting, as well as major events in which PUMA played a role such as the Third Global Forum on E-government, the Meeting of Chairs of Parliamentary Budget Committees and the Knowledge Management Forum. It urged the continued search for new tools and strategies to broaden and deepen the influence and impact of PUMA’s governance work.

Setting priorities to meet both new and existing challenges: E-Government

2. While PUMA has made much progress in its work programme, the Committee expressed its concern about the ability of the Secretariat to fully implement the work programme following reductions to the 2001 PUMA budget. The Secretariat has had to eliminate an entire activity area because it was unfeasible to maintain it given reduced funding.

3. In light of the new priority setting exercise, the Committee tasked the Secretariat to develop proposals reflecting its current priorities. It reaffirmed Enhancing Public Sector Capacity as a top priority in the work programme, but also identified the subject of E-Government as a vital focus of new work, in response to pressures in capitals to use new information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve the responsiveness and performance of government.

4. Building on PUMA’s contribution to the Third Global Forum on E-Government held in Naples in March 2001, and the resulting mandate for OECD follow-up, the Committee welcomed project proposals to look at the impact of e-government on the future shape and processes of government. This work also ties in with PUMA’s work on knowledge management, government-citizen connections and the management of large public IT projects.

Learning from country experiences: Ensuring integrity by increasing transparency and accountability

5. The growing demand for openness and transparency in government operations requires renewed frameworks for both organisational and individual accountability to ensure the integrity of public decisions. A presentation on the Irish experience in developing interlocking and mutually reinforcing instruments and measures showed the measures which have the most impact on cultural change in the public service to meet public expectations.
Learning from country experiences: Strengthening knowledge management to improve knowledge sharing

6. A presentation on the Canadian experience with knowledge management launched a stimulating discussion on the comprehensive approach needed to foster knowledge-sharing organisations in the public sector. The discussion underlined the importance of changing administration cultures and procedures by using a wide array of management tools and strategies as well as harnessing the potential of new ICTs.

Maintaining a strong commitment to governance outreach and a clear dialogue with non-member countries

7. The Committee welcomed, for the first time, observers from Brazil and Chile. PUMA has been building its relationship with non-member countries through the Governance Outreach Initiative and through outreach activities such as the Seoul Conference on Combating Corruption in the New Millennium, the APEC-OECD Conference on Regulatory Reform and the Naples Global Forum which have developed new audiences for its public management and governance work.

8. Mr. Eric Burgeat, Director of CCNM, made a presentation of the OECD Global Forum, a series of international events designed to strengthen dialogue between Member and non-member countries. The Committee agreed for the Secretariat to move forward with plans to organise an Autumn Dialogue with Non-Member Countries on Governance back-to-back with the 24th PUMA Committee meeting, Autumn 2001.

9. The Committee also reiterated its support for last year’s Draft Statement of Governance Priorities for the 21st Century, and encouraged the Secretariat to build on this work by exploring the possibility of a Declaration on Good Public Governance to be developed over the upcoming year to describe characteristics of good governance in the public sector. Such a statement would serve to focus the results of PUMA’s work on good governance and provide additional clarity to discussions on public governance both with outside partners and within the Organisation.

10. Mr. Robert Cornell briefed the Committee on the draft Checklist of Policy Coherence for Poverty Reduction on behalf of the Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD). The Committee urged caution and a more thorough consultation, given the very difficult issues of coherence, development and poverty reduction. While the discussion pointed to the benefits of introducing an explicit governance perspective into how countries work together to achieve coherence at the international level, PUMA, unfortunately, cannot contribute to this work given its recent budget reductions in this area.

A forward-looking vision of good governance

11. The combination of direction setting and substantive discussion at the Committee meeting continues to strengthen the governance agenda for PUMA and for the Organisation’s overall governance efforts. The Committee meeting underscored the fact that PUMA’s work in new governance areas such as e-government, transparency and accountability and relations with civil society and parliaments have made an important contribution to the Organisation’s understanding of these issues.

Paris, March 28, 2001