SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 25TH SESSION OF THE PUBLIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

21-22 March 2002, Château de la Muette, Paris

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Introduction and objectives of the meeting

1. Sixty-seven delegates from all 30 OECD countries, as well as from Brazil, Chile and the European Commission, attended the 25th session of the Public Management Committee on 21-22 March 2002 (see Annex). The main objectives of the meeting were:

   - To inform the Committee about the results of the 2002 Budget process and the implications for PUMA’s programme of work.

   - To achieve Committee consensus on the direction and focus of PUMA work through the Mid-term Review of the Committee Mandate and to solicit Committee feedback and priorities on preliminary themes for PUMA work for 2003-2004.

   - To foster substantive discussion of PUMA’s current work though presentation of two major outputs: Flagship reports on Regulatory Governance and Sustainable Development.

   - To provide the opportunity for substantive discussion and guidance on the "Modernising Government" project, including Distributed Public Governance, E-Government, Governing for Performance, and Budgeting for the Longer-Term Future.

Item 1 - Adoption of the agenda

2. The Chair of the Public Management Committee, Adam Wolf, introduced and welcomed the new Director of PUMA, Odile Sallard. The agenda was adopted, with a minor change of scheduling.

Item 2 - Election of Committee officers

3. The Chair noted that, in his discussions with Committee members, Pia Marconi of Italy had received full and unanimous support for her candidacy for Chair. He welcomed the candidates for Vice-Chair (Derek Gill of New Zealand and Klaus-Henning Rosen of Germany), and opened the floor for comments. The United States and Sweden expressed support for the candidates, and the Committee then unanimously elected the new Chair and Vice-Chairs. The remaining Bureau members were also re-elected for one year. Thus, the members of the current Bureau are as follows:

   - Pia Marconi, Chair (Italy)
   - Jonathan Breul, Vice Chair (United States)
   - Kangsoon Shin, Vice Chair (Korea)
   - Jacek Czaputowicz, Vice Chair (Poland)
   - Derek Gill, Vice Chair (New Zealand)
   - Klaus-Henning Rosen, Vice Chair (Germany)
Item 3 - Approval of the Summary Record of the 24th meeting of the Public Management Committee

4. The summary record of the 24th Session of the PUMA Committee was accepted as submitted.

Item 4 - Opening remarks by the Chair, including the report on the PUMA Bureau consultations with TUAC

5. The Chair noted the importance of the meeting, as it would be an opportunity to look at the PUMA work programme for 2003-2004 and also to carry out a mid-term review of the PUMA Mandate. This mandate marked a shift from a more narrow focus on public management to a broader focus on governance. The meeting would also provide a broad view of some of the substantial issues that the Secretariat and Working Parties had been working on over the past year, including two important reports: the flagship report on Regulatory Governance and the draft checklist on Sustainable Development.

6. Pia Marconi reported on the previous day's consultation between the PUMA Bureau and the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC). Mrs. Marconi described the consultation as positive and useful. Topics discussed included the PUMA work programme, the mid-mandate review, regulatory reform, sustainable development, e-government, distributed public governance and the Quality Public Services campaign by Public Services International. TUAC has an overall interest in the PUMA work programme, but its main interest is regulatory reform. TUAC presented a paper on Regulatory Policy Failure, and would welcome comments from the Secretariat and the Committee. TUAC stressed that it can play a positive role in the OECD's country reviews on regulatory reform, providing a third-party perspective. Within the regulatory reform work programme, TUAC feels it is important to highlight the importance of consultation and social dialogue, as they can help improve the quality of regulation. Finally, TUAC would like the Committee to consider ways of improving the relationship between TUAC and PUMA. In the mid- or longer-term, TUAC would like to have the (informal) status of observer in PUMA Committee meetings, but they are open to different options that would allow them to contribute to PUMA work. The Committee was asked to make a decision on whether, and how, these arrangements should be changed.

7. Delegates agreed that inviting TUAC and BIAC to participate on an ad hoc basis in certain Committee discussions seemed the best solution. As a first step, TUAC should be invited to present their activities to the next Committee, and the current consultation process should be upheld for the time being. The Chair also suggested that the role of trade unions and other civil society organisations in modernising government could be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

Item 5 - Update on the 2002 budget

8. The PUMA Director reported on the decisions of the OECD Budget Committee and the consequences for PUMA's 2002 work programme. She noted that the budget process had been particularly difficult this year, in terms of both agreeing a final total budget and choosing priorities. The Secretary-General had not proposed a cut for PUMA; indeed, he believes PUMA has a key role to play in the Organisation, as governance is at the heart of the issues OECD deals with. He sees two major roles for PUMA: first, as the reference on governance questions for all directorates. In particular, PUMA can complement economic policy recommendations produced by other directorates with analysis on the decision-making and policy implementation processes. This multi-dimensional approach is essential if the OECD is to help Member countries progress with structural reforms. Second, through its outreach activities, PUMA can help fulfil the OECD goal of sharing experience and best practice with non-members - the presence of Brazil, Chile and Slovenia at the Committee meeting is proof of the interest in such a dialogue in the area of public governance.
9. As regards the OECD budget, the Secretary-General had asked for a 3.5% nominal increase in the total budget, which would represent zero real growth; however, countries decided on a 1.6% increase, representing almost a 2% decrease in real terms. PUMA’s 2002 budget was cut 3.7% by suppressing the activity on Parliaments (which the PUMA Committee had designated as its -5% proposal) -- except for the meeting of legislative budget chairs organised with the US Senate in Washington, DC, which was already well advanced in the planning stage. Some other meetings have had to be cut, as well as all other Parliament-related activities. The networks that had been created in the context of this work will have to lie dormant until the 2003-2004 work programme is decided. However, the Secretariat should be able to deliver the rest of the work programme despite the cuts.

10. The Director went on to highlight significant aspects of work to date in the programme of work.

- Work on policy coherence will bring together results from work on knowledge management, sustainable development and risk management, and a report will be presented in the Autumn.

- PUMA will continue to draw upon the work on relations with citizens - in particular, for a meeting in Ljubljana on 23-24 May on Building Open Government.

- Work on fighting corruption is continuing, and a comparative report on managing conflicts of interest will be presented in the Autumn.

11. Other work highlighted by the Director included the development of a governance database of government expenditure in co-operation with the World Bank, and the survey of knowledge management practices in public services launched at the end of 2001. Finally, SIGMA activities are progressing to the satisfaction of both the countries involved and the European Commission. The contract for work with EU Candidate countries has been renewed until end 2002, and negotiations for a further extension are in progress; the Balkans contract has been renewed until end 2003.

12. As a final remark, the Director appealed to countries to ensure that permanent delegations are informed of the importance and value of PUMA work, in order to help prevent future budget cuts of the kind imposed on PUMA this year. Dialogue needs to be reinforced between Committee members, those in capitals who set priorities and the permanent delegations in Paris. This should facilitate next year’s budget discussions.

**Item 6 - Mid-term review of the Committee Mandate, 2002-2004**

13. The Chair reminded the Committee that the current PUMA Mandate was drafted by the PUMA Committee three years ago, and represented a significant change in the direction of PUMA’s work. This change was supported by the Secretary-General and the OECD Council as part of an effort to guide the Organisation as a whole towards a greater public governance perspective. In the drafting of this Mandate, the Chair felt that a consensus had been reached on the balance between change and continuity. The Committee had proposed to review this Mandate after two years, evaluating progress so far and identifying any adjustments that need to be made for the future.

14. The PUMA Director provided some context for the discussions by describing the current thinking on the future of the OECD as a whole. At the end of 2001, the Secretary-General had launched a process of reflection on the OECD’s mission, with three main objectives:

1. To adhere to the good governance practice of periodically reviewing the Organisation’s role and whether it is indeed fulfilling its mission.
2. To identify ways of strengthening the "multi-disciplinarity" of the OECD's activities to make the most of the Organisation's multi-dimensional perspective, which constitutes its main comparative advantage over other, more vertical, international organisations.

3. To find a way to improve priority-setting at the OECD.

15. The Council has created three working groups made up of Ambassadors to address the different aspects of the problem. The first, under the chairmanship of the Australian ambassador, is charged with finding new solutions for determining the budget and priorities. The second will study the committee and working group structure, and is chaired by the Canadian ambassador. The third, under the Dutch ambassador, will look at the structure and interrelationships of the OECD's different activities in the area of development.

16. In addition, the Secretary-General has recently made a new proposal to reinforce cross-cutting activities at the OECD and to improve priority-setting. He proposes dividing the Organisation's work into three categories or "boxes":

1. Box 3 comprises ongoing work, which forms the foundation of the OECD's work, but which is not particularly innovative.

2. Box 2 includes activities that need to be reinforced, particularly horizontal activities.

3. Box 1 contains new and emerging issues (e.g. the effects of terrorism) requiring a more rapid and flexible response by the Organisation.

The Secretary-General's strategy is to reconcile the priorities of the Council (Boxes 1 and 2) with ongoing work (Box 3). He proposes to transfer a percentage (e.g. 5%) of resources from Box 3 to the other two boxes over the next few years. More details on this proposal can be found in document C(2002)44. Nothing has been firmly decided, but these discussions provide important background to the discussion of the PUMA Mandate and the 2003-2004 work programme.

17. Jonathan Breul of the United States, one of the Bureau members who had helped draft the Mandate, reminded the Committee of the criteria embedded in the Mandate both for assessing progress and choosing future work (paragraph 3 of the Overview). In particular, activities should be forward-looking, policy-relevant and have a high-level impact.

18. In general, countries showed support for the mandate and praised the quality of the work carried out so far. While some countries noted that PUMA's impact was often difficult to judge and may not be visible in the short term, several countries provided concrete examples of how PUMA work had proven useful for informing policy decisions and making comparisons among countries. They agreed that PUMA should concentrate on a more limited number of activities, and ensure that work on a given activity is properly concluded before a new activity is launched. It was suggested that the description of activities and outputs be more directly linked with the criteria and themes of the Mandate.

19. Delegates expressed a need for shorter, more accessible and more timely reports from the Secretariat, especially for non-English-or-French-speaking countries. They also stressed that better communications were needed, both from the Secretariat and within countries, on PUMA activities, in order to raise PUMA's profile and enhance its reputation. Giving the Committee early warning about important upcoming reports and meetings would help delegates co-ordinate a response and/or support in their respective countries. Several delegates requested that SIGMA's work be more visible in the Mandate document, and some countries wondered whether, given PUMA's tight budget, too much capacity was
being spent on outreach activities. Finally, the possibility of carrying out an external evaluation of PUMA’s impact was raised.

20. The PUMA Director assured delegates that their concerns would be addressed, particularly regarding a more selective work programme and better communications. She noted that outreach activities did not come out of the PUMA budget, but were a sub-product of core activities, and thus not a real resource problem. She also pointed out that Member countries could benefit from non-members’ experiences. In terms of an external evaluation, she suggested an evaluation either by the OECD’s Executive Committee or by Member countries, and that this could be investigated in the context of the next Mandate.

Item 7 - Discussion of the PUMA work programme for 2003-2004

21. Rolf Alter presented a set of preliminary Secretariat proposals for major themes of the 2003-2004 programme of work, as well as the overall context in which these proposals are taking shape. First, he noted that a new budget framework would emerge from the Council’s working group on redefining the budget process. Given that several committees are already discussing the programme of work, the OECD Executive Director has recently indicated what the general principles of this framework will be, i.e.:

- The Council will expect each Committee to indicate the outputs expected and timeframes.
- The assumption is that in each year resources will be reduced by around 4%.
- Committees are encouraged to rank activities, clearly indicating what are top priorities and what is less important.

In the discussion, the focus would be on themes and activities. However, consideration could also be given to working methods, particularly ways to strengthen horizontality among divisions, and relations between the Committee and the different working parties.

22. With the Bureau, it had been decided to present a “menu approach” to the programme: themes and activities were developed as broad categories with a few explanations, including both ongoing and new activities under each theme. The Committee was asked to identify the priorities for the 2003/4 programme of work, taking into account the budget constraints that will be imposed later. This prioritisation exercise would cover both ongoing and new activities.

23. Based on the Committee’s comments and priority rankings, the Secretariat would prepare a draft Programme of Work and Budget, to be discussed with the Bureau and submitted to the Committee in written form by the end of June 2002 for approval.

24. Delegates welcomed the prioritisation exercise. Some countries found the proposed work programme ambitious, and many recommended being more selective while promoting horizontality. They noted the potential for integrating different aspects of PUMA work into more cross-cutting projects, and encouraged building on experience from previous work to enrich current and future activities. There was significant support for building on the quantitative aspect of public management work, although several countries remarked that choosing indicators could be difficult. Many delegates also expressed a need for more information on the costing of activities in order to make a more informed decision on priorities. Finally, delegates agreed that better evaluation of existing activities would be worthwhile.
25. The PUMA director assured delegates that this first step in the process of developing a programme of work for 2003-2004 would be complemented by more information, including information on costs, along with a more selective and detailed proposed work programme. Furthermore, all new activities would be horizontal in nature and draw upon work carried out by the different working parties.

Item 8 - Lessons learned: From interventionism to regulatory governance

26. Cesar Cordova-Novion presented the forthcoming flagship report on regulatory policies in OECD countries. This report draws upon 18 months of work by the Secretariat and the Working Party on Regulatory Management and Reform, and covers 20 years of government reforms, from deregulation to improving regulatory quality. It is currently being finalised and will be presented to the OECD Council in 2002, before its publication.

27. The report describes the emergence of regulatory policies, and identifies two overarching principles:

- Regulatory practices can substantially improve economic efficiency and dynamism and improve governmental capacity to protect other important public interests.
- Effective regulatory policies are a mix of deregulation, re-regulation and better quality regulation, backed up by new or improved institutions.

It also documents how the 1995 OECD Recommendation on improving the quality of government regulation has been adopted across the OECD membership, and highlights experiences, trends and good practices. The report emphasises that regulatory policies are key instruments for achieving public governance goals such as sustainable development and social and economic growth. The report focuses on policies, tools (how governments improve policies) and institutions (how tools are applied and enforced), noting where countries have had the most success as well as areas needing more work. Overall, despite the speed, spread and depth of adaptation, most countries have yet to apply completely the OECD Recommendation, and new developments are calling for "second generation" reforms. It was proposed that the Recommendation be updated and improved accordingly, and its adoption monitored.

28. Delegates expressed appreciation and support for the work on regulatory reform, and welcomed the forthcoming report. They agreed that the report should be presented to the Council in 2002. Many countries stressed the usefulness of the country review programme, in particular, while noting that the review process needs to be adapted to changing contexts. The Committee agreed that the 1995 Recommendation should be updated to take into account emerging issues such as sustainable development and new information technologies.

Item 9 - Sustainable development: Towards policy coherence and integration

29. Frédéric Bouter gave an overview of PUMA's contribution to the OECD's three-year project (1998-2001) on sustainable development, and reported on a seminar on Improving Governance for Sustainable Development held in November 2001. A major output of the seminar was a draft checklist of key criteria of governance for sustainable development. The Committee was asked to provide guidance on further developing these criteria, and also on proposed next steps, which included work on the impact of institutional innovations, budgeting, choice of policy instruments, relations with civil society and risk management. The Secretariat also provided information to participants on the other ministerial mandates for 2002-2004 relating to sustainable development, i.e. developing agreed indicators that measure progress.
across all three dimensions of sustainable development, including decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation; identifying how obstacles to policy reforms can be overcome; and analysing further the social aspects of sustainable development.

30. Helen Mountford, Counsellor in the OECD Environment Directorate, briefed the Committee on the OECD’s horizontal activity on sustainable development, and in particular the OECD Report to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to be held in Johannesburg later this year. The Report, commissioned by OECD Ministers at their meeting last Spring, will highlight main messages of OECD’s extensive work on sustainable development, and provide an assessment of the contribution of OECD country policies to sustainable development. Sections of the report, notably "Progress in establishing institutions of good governance for sustainable development" and "Strengthening the process of decision making for sustainable development", draw on previous PUMA work. The Report is being finalised and will be launched at the final preparatory meeting for the WSSD in Jakarta at the end of May.

31. Ms. Mountford also drew the Committee’s attention to other work in the OECD, including new OECD horizontal work on obstacles to subsidy reform, work in the Environment directorate on policy instruments and policy mixes, and new work on environmental awareness and perceptions. Finally, she mentioned a conference in April on financing the environmental dimension of sustainable development, the first event of the CCNM’s Global Forum on Sustainable Development.

32. Delegates welcomed the Secretariat paper and key criteria. They remarked that sustainable development still seemed to be considered an environmental issue in many countries, and that efforts were needed to involve other sectoral ministries, including finance. They noted that PUMA could make an important contribution to work on sustainable development, but must concentrate on where it could add value. Suggestions included integrating sustainable development into the budget process, fostering institutional co-ordination, broadening public participation (e.g. through the Aarhus Convention), applying a sound mix of policy instruments, and risk management.

Item 10 - Modernising government

33. PUMA is reviewing OECD experience of ten years of public sector modernisation, with a view to assisting Members to build a more adaptable public sector able to support a strong and prosperous society, while preserving underlying governance values. This study covers the following areas with the strongest potential to influence the incentives of public officials: budgeting for the longer-term future, governing for results, e-government and distributed public governance.

Budgeting for the longer-term future: Report on upcoming SBO meeting

34. This session looked at how OECD countries can adjust national budgeting processes to support decision-makers in taking better account of the longer-term future. This subject will be the main theme of both the SBO meeting (co-hosted with the Office of Management and Budget) and the legislative budget chairs meeting (co-hosted with the Budget Committee of the US House of Representatives) to be held in Washington, DC this June. Michael Ruffner gave a brief introduction to the issue, and discussed results of PUMA’s work in the past and the challenges that lie ahead.

35. Over the past ten years, reforms in national budgeting and accounting systems have played an important role in changing the behaviour of political and administrative decision-makers. With the strengthening of transparent medium-term control of budget aggregates and the introduction of accrual accounting, considerable progress has been made across the OECD in reducing public deficits and in
improving efficiency. The paramount challenge for this decade is how to reallocate resources in response to the changing needs of society, and how to make financial provision for adverse inter-generational trends.

36. Delegates evoked the extreme difficulty of long-term budget planning. Nonetheless, Norway and Ireland described their efforts to establish funds for future expenditures such as pensions. Delegates discussed the need to transmit the longer-term perspective to civil society as well as politicians in order to secure political backing for long-term planning; links could thus be made with PUMA work on civil society issues and e-government. The Committee felt that PUMA could help countries tackle this issue, and expressed support for greater integration of the valuable work done in SBO in this area and in general. The PUMA director informed the Committee of plans to launch a horizontal project in the OECD on fiscal relations between levels of government.

**Governing for Results**

37. This part of the session was devoted to results-focussed management and budgeting, based on the paper by the Secretariat, "Governing for Results". This PUMA project looks at the advantages and constraints in introducing formal performance targets, indicators and measurement systems into public management at government, organisational and individual levels. Alex Matheson gave a brief introduction to the issue and outlined PUMA's recent achievements in this area. Joachim Vollmuth, Head of Division of the EU and International Affairs of the Public Service in the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, reported on the joint German-OECD Symposium on Governing for Performance held recently in Berlin. Jonathan Breul gave a presentation raising pertinent questions on how countries are implementing results-focussed management and budgeting.

38. The Committee confirmed the importance of linking performance at the whole-of-government, sectoral, organisational and individual levels of management. It also confirmed the strong links between the management reform agenda and good governance -- especially in providing parliaments and the public with better accountability. An issue for particular attention is how to improve coherence in the functioning of strategy, budgeting, regulation, accounting, internal control, audit, evaluation and personnel management, in different cultures.

**E-Government Project: Report on initial findings of the first OECD E-Government Seminar**

39. Hélène Gadriot-Renard introduced the agenda item with a report on the first OECD E-Government Seminar on "Vision, Responsiveness and Measurement" held 11-12 March. This meeting focused on the governance dimension of e-government, and in particular the capacity of e-government to contribute to governments' ability to respond to the demands of a changing society, including through e-consultation and participation. Discussions at the meeting will be an important input into the final PUMA flagship report due in early 2003.

40. Donald G. Lenihan of the Centre for Collaborative Government (Canada) discussed three interconnected, mutually supporting aspects of e-government: improving service delivery, information as a new public resource, and democracy: extending public space.

41. The Committee strongly endorsed the vision of e-government as an important driver of reform in public administrations, with implications that go far beyond the electronic delivery of services. By the same token, e-government is an important tool for promoting good governance, but only if good governance principles are embedded into e-government planning from the outset.
42. Members stressed the need for the PUMA E-Government Project to address the real challenges to implement and sustain e-government reforms: challenges such as understanding consumer and citizen needs; developing whole-of-government approaches across decentralised administrations; and assessing funding needs and potential impacts. The Committee also emphasised the need for the Project to produce intermediate outputs prior to the Final Report due in early-2003, in order to share early findings with Members.

**Distributed Public Governance**

43. Alex Matheson gave a brief introduction to PUMA’s work on distributed public governance -- how government ensures proper oversight and accountability of the increasing organisational diversity of the public sector. The first phase of the project has involved developing a common language and typology allowing countries to discuss issues of the wider state sector, and understanding the governance challenges that this sector poses. In a second phase, the Secretariat will gather information and develop critical tools to help countries improve the governance of agencies, authorities and other government bodies.

44. Such bodies have been increasing in number as countries seek organisational forms that encourage sharper customer focus, more flexible management, a differentiated control environment, or independence from inappropriate political control. It is estimated that more than half of public expenditure and employment in OECD countries is through such bodies. Over time, however, some countries have found that the autonomy or independence of these bodies has in some cases reduced co-ordination, transparency and accountability, thus impairing the collective public interest.

45. Delegates heard a presentation by Claude Rochet, chargé de mission at the French Ministry of Civil Service and Reform of the State, on the strategic monitoring of policy implementation by public establishments in France. He discussed the findings of a major survey of French public establishments recently undertaken by the Ministry. Derek Gill, Branch manager at the New Zealand State Services Commission, briefly presented his country’s experience with reforming Crown Entities.

46. The Committee saw a need for PUMA to pay more attention to the governance of those agencies, authorities and other public bodies that operate "at arm's length" from the centre of government. Delegates commended the Secretariat for distilling the issues involved, and endorsed the project on Distributed Public Governance.
ANNEX
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