PUBLIC MANAGEMENT SERVICE
PUBLIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

22nd Annual Meeting of Senior Budget Officials
Paris, 21-22 May 2001

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STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. Senior Budget Officials from OECD Member countries met on 21-22 May 2001, under the chairmanship of Mr. Geert van Maanen, Secretary-General, Netherlands Ministry of Finance.

2. The fiscal position of Member countries is better now than at any other time in recent history with more Member countries enjoying higher surpluses than ever before. Today’s environment of relative fiscal abundance is, however, clouded by unprecedented fiscal demands looming in future years, especially as the results of ageing populations and the concomitant expenditures for health and social security programs. Delegates discussed measures to incorporate a more long-term orientation to the budget process.

3. Following the inaugural Symposium of Parliamentary Budget Committee Chairpersons, which took place in January 2001, Delegates discussed the changing role of the legislature in the budget process. The tendency in a number of Member countries is for the legislature to take a more assertive role in budget policy and for parliaments to re-examine their internal organisation and processes for the discussion of the budget.

4. Delegates noted the Declaration adopted by the Chairpersons of OECD Parliamentary Budget Committees, which stated inter alia:

   Parliamentary budget processes and policies support sound governance when they promote fiscal responsibility, transparency, [and] a future-orientation.

5. There is more public attention being paid to the budget and to the details of the budget than in the past. Delegates noted that this was the result of the budget’s role as the government’s key policy document, but that it was also the result of changes to the presentation of the budget, focusing more on results which make the budget more understandable for the public at large. Delegates noted the increased use of performance budgeting, including outcomes and outputs, and the need for further exchange of views and identification of best practices in this area in the near future.
6. Delegates noted that new analytical tools to study how the budget impacts different population groups are becoming increasingly common in Member countries. In the light of the importance placed on this subject by the recent OECD Council Meeting at Ministerial level, Delegates discussed the use of such tools in gender analysis of the budget.

7. Delegates noted the importance of the high-level Conference on Gender Budgeting to take place in Brussels on 16-17 October, co-sponsored by UNIFEM, the OECD, the Nordic Council and hosted by the Belgian Government.

8. The budgeting system of the Netherlands was peer reviewed and confirmed the favourable view expressed in the Secretariat’s report.