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Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Economiques  
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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English - Or. English

**PUBLIC GOVERNANCE AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE  
TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE**

## **Working Party on Territorial Policy in Rural Areas**

### **SUMMARY RECORD**

#### **5th Session of the Working Party on Territorial Policy in Rural Areas**

**Held on 26 November 2003**

*The Summary Record of the 5th Session of the Working Party on Territorial Policy in Rural Area is submitted to Delegates for APPROVAL at its 6th Session taking place on 7 December 2004.*

*The meeting will begin at 10 am on 7 December and will be held at the:*

*Salle des Nations  
Tour Europe  
33 place des Corolles  
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## **WORKING PARTY ON TERRITORIAL POLICY IN RURAL AREAS**

### **5th Session**

**26 November 2003, OECD Headquarters, Paris – Room 6**

#### **1. Adoption of the Agenda**

1. The presentation of the activities of the IVW.AGR Task Force on Statistical Systems for Rural Development, Item 5, was moved to the end of the day in order keep together the substantive discussion on the ongoing activities of the group. The Working Party agreed to this change and the Agenda was adopted.

#### **2. Election of the Bureau**

2. Further to the recent resignation of Heather Clemensen, Canada, the Chair had consulted Working Party Delegates in advance of the meeting to request delegates' interest, views and proposals of a candidate for the vacant position. In response to interest shown from Mexico and the US it was proposed to enlarge the Bureau. Mr. Mark Drabenstott, Federal Reserve Bank, US and Mr. Sergio Soto, SEDESOL, Mexico were the proposed candidates. Delegates from Canada, France, Greece, and Japan seconded the nominations and welcomed the US and Mexico as Vice-Chairs in the Bureau. Canada expressed its intention to continue to actively participate in the activities of the Working Party and of the TDPC overall.

#### **3. Approval of the Summary Record of the 4<sup>th</sup> Session**

3. The Summary Record of the 4<sup>th</sup> Session was adopted.

#### **4. Opening remarks by the Chair and Statement by the Director**

4. The Chair welcomed delegates to the 5<sup>th</sup> Session of the Working Party. Mr. Rolf Alter, Deputy Director of GOV, presented an overview of the latest developments in the Directorate. He reported on the outcome of the TDPC High-Level Meeting (HLM) held in June 2003. The HLM provided guidelines for the TDPC's future direction of work and confirmed clear orientations for a reinforcement of work in the areas of competitiveness, governance, and statistics. The event was timely in view of the OECD Programme of Work and Budget Reform. The Director explained the implications and time table for the Committee and its Working Parties in its preparation of the biennial programme of work for 2005-2006, in line and interlinked with the preparation of a new five year mandate from 2005-2009. He mentioned that at the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the TDPC a background document prepared by the Secretariat would serve as a basis of discussion. The Chairs of the Working Parties would be invited to contribute to the TDPC discussion and convey the views of their respective groups. Further to approval via the written procedure from the Committee and its Working Parties the documents will be submitted to the Executive Directorate (EXD) - for the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) - and to the Council Secretariat - for the Mandate Proposal - in Spring 2004.

5. Delegates supported the direction taken by the TDPC to strengthen the synergies among the TDPC family through the work carried out by the working parties on indicators and on the rural and urban dimensions of territorial policy. It was agreed that this should be reflected strongly in the TDPC programme of work and new mandate. Delegates emphasised the value-added of territorial indicators to the work of the group and the benefits of enhancing co-operation among them through increased communication, shared knowledge and wider dissemination of outputs between the plenary sessions. The Chair requested that the Working Party be involved at the design stage of activities for the Programme of Work. A proposal for the Working Party's contribution to this and to the new mandate would be circulated early 2004.

## 6. Rural Development and Multi-level Governance

6. The Secretariat introduced the item as one of three main themes on the TDPC Agenda to which the rural context feeds in well. The presentation began with the report on *Rural Development and Multi-level Governance*. The document aimed to encourage inputs to orient ongoing work on rural governance issues. It presented the main challenges and trends for rural governance and provided questions for discussion in view of future work. This was followed by a presentation by Mr. Sergio Soto, Director General (Ministry of Social Development, Mexico) on the on-going case study on *Place-based policies for Rural Development – The Micro-regions’ Strategy in Mexico*. The Secretariat informed that case studies were also underway in Italy, Spain and shortly Hungary.

7. In the roundtable discussion that followed delegates stressed the importance of the subject for many countries. The report on rural development and multi-level governance provides response to changes taking place in rural regions and in policy approaches. The Secretariat noted the importance of the evaluation and scope concerning EU and member country programmes and to assess present trends. From the debate, main issues emerged around the importance of partnerships, the co-ordination of networks, the constitution of new rural development funds, the mechanisms to be delivered, the need for new institutions and new incentives for local initiatives, the question of how and who acts as a catalyst for action, the importance of analysing different models of contracts, and the question of capacity building.

8. The Secretariat reminded delegates of recent activities, for example, the Siena conference in Italy, an informal meeting of the Working Party. In the publication of its proceedings: *The Future for Rural Policy*, there is clear evidence of the importance of showing a rural lense in policies and its importance for growth and social cohesion. There is a need for place-based policy in rural areas, but not yet a coherent framework. The Secretariat could analyse existing examples to compare and write policy recommendations. The Working Party can contribute to the work of OECD but can also have a larger impact. Regarding the Forum on Fiscal Relations Across Levels of Government, a joint initiative including the Directorates of GOV, DAFPE and ECO, the Rural Working Party could provide input.

9. The Secretariat invited countries to suggest other case studies. A set of first results will be delivered to the TDPC in December 2004 and a final report presented in 2005.

## Item 7. Infrastructure Policy for Rural Development

10. The Secretariat introduced the document, which was updated to describe the impacts of infrastructure project in generating regional competitiveness. It includes a proposal for the next phase of work requesting input from the Working Party from a rural perspective. Delegates were pleased to note that both “soft” and “green” infrastructure were included but felt that emphasis was lacking on the rural dimension. It was agreed that infrastructure development should be specifically linked to competitive position of individual regions and that it should be recognised that not all infrastructure developments will have a positive impact and the different actors come up against obstacles and encounter conflict between national and local levels of government. Furthermore, it would be a good idea to include “golden” infrastructure, which concerns the cultural and heritage dimension of infrastructure policy.

11. The Working Party noted that in the next stage of work it would be useful to have rural case studies. The Secretariat thanked delegates and noted the comments made, inviting delegates to provide case studies by February 2004. These will be taken into account along with comments from the other working parties and from the TDPC. An interim report will be presented by the Secretariat for discussion at the TDPC in June 2004 and a final report will be presented by the Secretariat for approval at the TDPC in November 2004.

### **Item 8. Regional Competitiveness Policies**

12. The Secretariat presented the interim report, which anticipates the final synthesis due 2004. The three main purposes of the report are to summarise some of the contextual issues relevant to competitiveness and clarify its use in policy, to assess the findings of the territorial reviews relating to the practical application of competitiveness policies, and to identify areas where the continuation of this work in 2004 should focus. In this way, the paper contributes to responding to the two key questions identified by the Chair of TDPC at the High Level Meeting, namely: (1) Why are regional competitiveness policies so relevant?, and (2) What should be the content of these policies?

13. The Working Party commended the report and stressed the importance of providing input to allow for the rural dimension to be clearer and more specific. From the round table debate main issues emerged on the importance of recognising distinctive rural challenges, the importance of skills based in rural areas, the need to demonstrate the benefits of a competitiveness policy approach, and to develop an institutional framework and support. The Secretariat informed delegates that the comments of the group would be reflected in the discussion the following day at the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the TDPC and that the final report would take into account comments, providing a framework for competitive policies from a rural perspective.

14. This synthesis reports on competitiveness and governance will be completed over the coming months and will be integrated into a general publication on perspectives for territorial development policies, thus forming a substantive basis for analysis in these areas.

### **Item 9. Other Business**

15. Mr. Ray Bollman, Chair of the Working Party on Territorial Indicators presented a brief overview of the activities of the group. He reported on the presentation made at the Working Party's 7<sup>th</sup> Session by Mr. Karlsson, UNECE, on the work of the IWG.AGR Task Force on the Statistical Systems for Rural Development. He invited delegates to consult the website for further information at the following URL: <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/rural.htm>

16. Mr. Mark Drabenstott, the Delegate of the *United States*, briefly presented the forthcoming OECD Conference on the *New Approaches to Rural Policy: Lessons from Around the World - An International Conference*. The event, jointly organised by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Rural Policy Research Institute, University of Missouri, *United States* and the OECD, will be held in March 2004.

17. The 6<sup>th</sup> Session of the Working Party would be held on 7 December 2004.

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TERRITORIAL POLICY IN RURAL AREAS**

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SUR LES POLITIQUES TERRITORIALES EN ZONES RURALES**

26 November 2003

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