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AS,

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

Dear Prime Minister,

SERIAL No. T 211/84

At a meeting of the Prime Ministers of the Nordic Countries held in Reykjavik on 12 and 13 December, the attached statement regarding air pollution and acidification was agreed upon. As the meeting was held in Iceland, I was entrusted with the task of submitting this statement to the Government of the United Kingdom.

The Nordic Prime Ministers urge the British Government to adhere to the proposals contained in the statement.

Yours sincerely,

Steingrímur Hermannsson  
Prime Minister

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP,  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1



Statement by the Nordic Prime Ministers on  
air pollutants and acidification

1. The Nordic Prime Ministers, meeting in Oslo in Autumn 1982, expressed their concern about the damage to human health and to the environment caused by emissions of air pollutants, in particular sulphur and nitrogen pollutants.
2. Since then the damage has further increased in a serious way. New reports disclose extensive forest damage, acidification of ground water and increased risks of damage to human health. Reports of this kind have been published in a number of the Nordic countries as well as in other European and North American countries. Together these reports show that air pollution emissions and acidification constitute one of the most serious environmental problems of the industrialized world today.
3. The reports also emphasize the need to intensify efforts, both nationally and internationally, to solve these serious problems.
4. Internationally the Nordic countries have, ever since the question of air pollutants was brought up at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm 1972, through close cooperation been able to play a most active role. Most recently these countries have taken the initiative within the framework of the UN ECE Convention on long-range transboundary air pollution regarding an agreement on a reduction by 1993 of sulphur emission, as a first step, of a minimum of 30 percent.
5. The Prime Ministers note with satisfaction that twenty countries have so far adopted the Nordic proposal. At the same time, it is regrettable that several of those countries with considerable emissions, which affect environmental conditions in the Nordic countries, have not considered themselves able to achieve this target and have thus not been able to endorse the proposal. The Prime Ministers urge the British Government to adhere to the Nordic proposal.
6. The Prime Ministers consider that it is now important that the negotiations that are taking place within the framework of the UN ECE Convention on a protocol on reduction of a minimum of 30 per cent by the year 1993 can be concluded as soon as possible in accordance with the Nordic proposal.



7. In the light of the role of nitrogen oxides as a cause of forest damage, both directly and indirectly, in connection with ozone formation, it is imperative that early agreements can also be reached on considerable reductions in these emissions. Such reductions in emissions must include emissions from stationary plants as well as from vehicles.

8. Against this background, the Nordic Prime Ministers note with satisfaction that the European Community, as a first step towards more stringent requirements for car exhausts, now appears to be aiming at introducing obligatory legislation on lead-free petrol as from October 1989, with the possibility for member states to introduce lead-free petrol on a voluntary basis at an earlier date. It is the hope of the Prime Ministers that as many countries as possible, within the EEC as well as outside, will introduce lead-free petrol as soon as possible and well before the year 1993. The Nordic countries will, on their part, take the required measures to make it possible to market lead-free petrol in the Nordic countries as soon as practically possible.

In this context, it is of great importance that the international cooperation at expert level, that was started in Summer 1984 in Stockholm between the Nordic countries and six other countries, can continue. The aim of this cooperation is to try to reach a harmonization of the practical introduction of stricter control of car exhaust in the countries concerned.

9. In conclusion, the Prime Ministers note that the Nordic countries have taken or will take extensive measures to reduce emissions of air pollutants. In order to find a solution to the serious environmental effects caused by air pollutants it is, however, necessary that all countries take action as soon as possible to reduce the total amount of sulphur and nitrogen compounds. The Nordic countries will continue their close cooperation inter alia in their preparations for and during the third meeting with the Executive Body of the UN ECE Convention as well as in other international bodies.