



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

25 April 1986

*Dear Secretary-General.*

Thank you for your letter of 7 March about the financial difficulties facing the United Nations Organisation. I understand that you will now have received from the Netherlands Foreign Minister a reply on behalf of the twelve member states of the European Community to your separate letter to Foreign Ministers.

You know of the concern I have expressed in the past about the failure of certain member states to make their proper financial contribution to the activities of the UN, including in particular peacekeeping. We have also deplored the tendency to impose upon the Secretariat unworkable mandates, superfluous conferences and pointless studies, without regard to the political limits to the tolerance of those states who must provide the funding for such activities. The present crisis brings with it an opportunity for the membership of the United Nations and the Secretariat to examine rigorously the implications of such financial irresponsibility and to establish a broader consensus on how the United Nations' resources should be most effectively deployed.

There is therefore an onus upon the Secretariat to instill a sense of financial responsibility among member states, and to be bold in identifying those activities which must be sacrificed if the organisation is to live within the resources available to it. Remedies for the short-term



difficulties are not to be found in voluntary contributions, borrowing, or other special measures to increase income: they are to be found on the expenditure side. Hard and politically contentious decisions must be made about the United Nations' expenditure, its staffing, and its programme priorities. I do not underestimate the difficulty you face in taking any initiatives in this area, but I believe it important that you are seen to take a leading role in resolving the crisis in the longer as well as the short term.

For the longer term, I believe attention must be paid to the deficiencies in a budgetary system which allows a number of small contributors to the organisation to impose on the major donors substantial financial contributions to activities which they regard as inappropriate and wasteful. The United Kingdom has consistently fulfilled its financial obligations to the United Nations and we have already paid in full our contribution for 1986. We nonetheless believe that the present budgetary arrangements are unsatisfactory. We shall join actively in the search for appropriate and workable changes in the system, which will permit the United Nations to emerge strengthened from the present crisis.

I am much looking forward to seeing you next month.

With best wishes,

*Yours sincerely*  
*Margaret Thatcher*

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His Excellency Senor Javier Perez de Cuellar