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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
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PS/Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs

AUTUMN STATEMENT

At this morning's meeting of Cabinet, the Prime Minister said she intended that Cabinet should discuss the outcome of the Public Expenditure Survey at its next meeting on 6 November.

In previous years, the Autumn Statement has been made on the Monday or Tuesday following the Cabinet meeting. This year, Parliament will not be sitting then. Rather than hold over the announcement until Thursday, 13 November after Parliament has resumed, the Chancellor plans, assuming all the necessary decisions have been taken, to make an Oral Statement on the afternoon of 6 November. The printed document would be presented to Parliament the following week.

The Chancellor proposes to accompany his Oral Statement with Press Notices containing the Industry Act forecast and a summary table of the expenditure plans; these would be made available in the Vote Office. He hopes that Departments will be ready as usual to issue Press Notices on the same day giving the main features of their programmes, and wherever possible backing that up with appropriate material on output, rather than emphasizing the money spent. The Prime Minister has stressed the importance she attaches to a positive and forward-looking presentation of the main features of the Autumn Statement.

A Statement on 6 November would not leave the usual interval between the Cabinet discussion and the Autumn Statement, and it is therefore particularly important that the texts of Press Notices should be agreed with the Treasury in advance to ensure both that the figuring is consistent and that the presentation is in line with the way the Autumn Statement as a whole is put over.

To ensure that the release of departmental Press Notices is properly co-ordinated with the announcements from the Treasury, I would be grateful if each Department could:

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- (i) notify the relevant Treasury Division by Monday morning whether it intends to issue a Press Notice on the day of the Autumn Statement;
- (ii) show the Treasury Division concerned a draft by close on Monday;
- (iii) provide Doug Walters here (233-8652) with the name and telephone number of someone in each Department who can be contacted about the arrangements for sending copies to the Treasury;
- (iv) provide this office with 100 copies of the Press Notice by 4.00 pm on Wednesday so that we can circulate them if the Oral Statement is made the following day.
- (v) arrange for the contact to inform Doug Walters by 2.00 pm at the latest on Thursday, 6 November if there is to be any modification of the Press Notice following the Cabinet discussion.

Although these plans are being made to allow for the Oral Statement to be made on 6 November, this cannot of course be taken for granted. It will depend on the settlement of any programmes still outstanding and the Cabinet discussion itself. For the time being, therefore, no public statement of the likely date of the Statement should be made. I should be grateful if you could ensure that knowledge of the arrangements is confined to those who need to know. If Departments are asked about the date of the Statement, they should say that the public expenditure round has not yet been concluded and that the Autumn Statement will be made as soon as practicable after final agreement has been reached.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to all Cabinet Ministers and to David Norgrove (No 10).

A C S ALLAN
Principal Private Secretary