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Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

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Prime Minister's Office
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1 February 1984

Dear Tim

COUNCIL OF FISHERIES MINISTERS: 31 JANUARY 1984

... I attach a copy of the statement which Mr Jopling hopes to make in the House today. I would be grateful for immediate clearance.

/ I am copying this letter to Bernard Ingham; David Heyhoe (Leader of the House's Office); Murdo Maclean (Whip's Office, Commons); David Beamish (Whip's Office, Lords); David Wright (Cabinet Office); Keith Long (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office) and to Private Secretaries of the other Agriculture Ministers and members of the OD(E).

*Yours Sincerely
Ivor Llewelyn*

IVOR LLEWELYN
Private Secretary

STATEMENT OF OUTCOME OF FISHERIES COUNCIL: 31 JANUARY 1984

With permission, Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement on the Council of Fisheries Ministers meeting in Brussels on 31 January. Together with the Minister of State at the Scottish Office I represented the United Kingdom.

The Council reached agreement, on the basis of compromise proposals put forward by the Presidency and the Commission, on the Total Allowable Catches and quotas for 1984 for all fish species other than North Sea herring. The scientific advice on the management of the herring stocks will not be available for a few more months. We obtained significant improvements over the original proposals on a number of stocks of interest to United Kingdom fishermen, in particular cod and haddock West of Scotland, Western mackerel and a variety of sole and plaice stocks in Western and Southern waters. We have a clear commitment from the Commission that every effort will be made in further discussions with Norway to secure an increased availability of North Sea cod. We secured greater flexibility for our fishermen in respect of the closure of the mackerel fishery North West of Scotland. The Council has therefore for the first time set TACs and quotas early in the year to which they relate. This is an important achievement since it gives fishermen throughout the Community a secure basis on which to plan their catching and their marketing operations.

Pending receipt of the full scientific advice on herring in the North Sea, the Council approved interim arrangements, which the Commission had agreed with Norway. Under this agreement, up to 31 July Norway will be free to fish for 15,000 tonnes while the Member States of the Community will have quotas totalling 54,300 for the same period.

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allocation of these quotas has been carried out on the basis of the key agreed at the Council on 14 December. The question of the distribution of Member States' quotas between the three areas of the North Sea will be studied and a report made to the next Council in March. While I expressed concern at the relative size of the interim allocation to Norway, I accepted the proposal on the basis of a clear Council declaration confirming the declaration agreed on 3/4 October concerning the distribution of North Sea herring as between Norway and the Community and emphasising that the interim arrangements agreed for the early months of 1984 do not prejudice the definitive allocation for 1984 and for subsequent years.

The Council also agreed on the conclusion of a reciprocal fisheries agreement for 1984 with Sweden, an agreement with Senegal on access to fishing opportunities there on an improved basis, and on a new agreement with Seychelles on access to tuna fishing opportunities.

Finally, I raised the question of progress on the arrangements for improved enforcement of the Common Fisheries Policy. I was told that as of today 9 of the 13 Community inspectors would be in post and that, while it has not been easy getting hold of people of the right quality and experience, the remaining 4 inspectors had been nominated and would be in post within the next few months. As to the Community logbooks and landing declarations, consultation on their text and format has now been completed and tenders for printing will be issued in the next few days.

This Council therefore marked another important step in transforming the Common Fisheries Policy into a living and working reality.