

PRIME MINISTER

OZONE CONFERENCE: 7 MARCH

As Nicholas Ridley will know, I am currently considering what DTI can do to help achieve our environmental objectives. It seems to me that your speech to the Conference on 7 March provides a useful opportunity in this respect.

2. What I should like to suggest is that the speech includes a short passage emphasising the environmental obligations of business and outlining the sort of action I have in mind. The key message would be that environmental pollution offers both a challenge and an opportunity for business; that Government and business working together can maximise environmental and economic benefits; and that to that end we are actively integrating environmental considerations into economic policy making. I would follow this up in April by launching a major awareness campaign and subsequently making a series of announcements about more specific programmes.

3. A passage on these lines would not only provide an ideal platform for the awareness campaign but show the UK and international audience that we are giving practical effect to 'sustainable development'. If you are attracted by the idea, we will gladly provide a suitable draft contribution to the speech.

4. As I say I have not yet decided the final form and content of DTI's initiative in this area. But I am clear that the first essential is a programme designed to raise the level of awareness of environmental considerations in business and help spread knowledge of good environmental practice. The market is the best



the department for Enterprise

mechanism for changing business attitudes towards the environment but despite the growth of green consumerism present signals are weak. An awareness campaign which reinforced these signals would help the adjustment process and provide a base for more specific programmes aimed at stimulating innovation through collaborative research schemes, achieving better management of industrial waste and improving other aspects of business' environmental performance. The ultimate aim would be to get business to take a long term view, and take environmental considerations into account in all aspects of corporate decision making.

5. I am glad to say DoE have welcomed the idea of a more positive DTI involvement in environmental matters as complementing their own activities in this area. That is exactly my purpose. Robert Atkins has already had useful discussions with both Malcolm Caithness and Virginia Bottomley and will be keeping them closely in touch with developments.

6. I am copying this letter to Nicholas Ridley.

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6 FEBRUARY 1989

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