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From the Private Secretary

13 February 1989

*See Deborah,*

PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH AT THE OZONE CONFERENCE

You wrote to Dominic Morris on 6 February enclosing a draft synopsis for the Prime Minister's speech at the 'Saving the Ozone Layer' conference.

I have now had a chance to discuss this with the Prime Minister. As she will speak at the end of the conference, she wants her speech to be fairly brief, broad brush and political. I enclose a revised synopsis for the speech, with which she is generally content. I should be grateful if you could now fill it out into a first draft which I should like to have, if possible, by the evening of 23 February.

Meanwhile, Dominic Morris will be dealing with the other points in your letter.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to Neil Thornton (Department of Trade and Industry), Bob Peirce (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and to John Fairclough (Cabinet Office). I think the Prime Minister would welcome it if the FCO could arrange for Sir Crispin Tickell to see the synopsis and let us have his comments as well.

*Yours sincerely,*

CHARLES POWELL

Miss Deborah Lamb  
Department of the Environment

## DRAFT SYNOPSIS

- For several centuries we have all worked on the assumption that mankind could pursue the goal of steady economic progress without paying attention to the effect on the fundamental equilibrium of the world's systems and atmosphere.
- In a very short space of time, that comfortable assumption has been changed. We now realise that major changes in the atmosphere's chemistry have taken place, even though we still do not fully understand the scale and nature of them.
- We need to create greater public awareness of the problems and understanding of the need for action, without creating an atmosphere of crisis or panic. Considerable progress has already been made with this, e.g. sale of ozone-friendly products.
- Science has solved many problems in the past and there is every reason to expect it to help us solve these new problems, without sacrificing economic development. We realise how important this last point is for the LDCs.
- The first need is for good science, to understand what is happening to the atmosphere's chemistry, what needs to be done to restore a balance and the time-span within which action has to be taken. Britain is contributing in a major way, in particular through the work of the British Antarctic Survey.
- We must avoid hasty solutions which only create new problems in other areas, e.g. the effects of three-way catalysts.
- We need to tackle the problems on a global basis. It is not a task for a praetorian guard of privileged countries who arrogate to themselves the duty of laying down rules and



regulations. Every country needs to be involved and play its part. The atmosphere belongs to us all.

- We do not need new institutions. We have the international bodies already, above all UNEP. Institution-building only distracts from the real tasks.
- The priority is to identify specific and practical steps which will slow down the damage to the ozone layer and eventually reverse the trend.
- That has been the purpose of the London Conference. It has been an Action Conference. It has increased awareness of the problem. And it has identified a clear course of action - a commitment to a very major reduction in the use of CFCs - which will help deal with it.
- Of course it is not the last word. The Conference is just one step in a process which must continue. The next step is the meeting in Helsinki in May where the parties to the Montreal Protocol will have a more detailed discussion of the scientific and technological aspects. We must keep up the momentum.
- But already as a result of this conference we can see that there are technological solutions to ozone depletion that can be brought within the reach of every country. This will help Third World countries avoid the mistakes which the industrialised countries have made.
- We must also find solutions which are compatible with continued and sustained economic growth and meet the hopes of Third World countries for higher standards of living. Moreover, we need the prosperity to finance and make possible the solutions.
- The action is not all for governments, there is a role for industry and the private sector in developing new technologies.

- The most important task of all is to change attitudes, to make people realise that simply carrying on as we are is not an option.