



Prime Minister:

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING OF ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS OF SUMMIT COUNTRIES, 17 DECEMBER 1984

You will recall that the London Summit last June invited Environment Ministers to identify areas for continuing cooperation; and that we decided to call a meeting of the Ministers concerned in order to discharge this remit.

The meeting was duly held under my chairmanship at Lancaster House on 17 December. All the Summit countries, except France, were represented, together with the European Commission: Germany, Italy, and Canada by Ministers; the USA, Japan and the Commission by senior officials because, in each case, pressing domestic commitments had detained their respective political masters.

As you know, the French Minister's absence - which we all regretted - had no significance for our bilateral relationships but arose from French insistence that political discussion in the Summit context should take place only at Head of State or Government level.

The meeting produced an agreed report to Heads of State or Government, for consideration at the next Summit in Bonn. I attach a copy. It is, inevitably, couched in the inelegant composite language of international meetings, but I think that it represents a useful achievement on our part in steering the discussion towards constructive strategic ideas and away from the more immediate and partisan preoccupations of some of our partners. In particular, it stresses the fundamental links between environmental and economic policies; the importance of collaboration in dealing with longer-term problems (such as those of climate) as much as with more immediate ones; the need for industrialised countries to help in finding

Agree to write
to Chancellor Kohl with
a copy of the Summit report
and, in addition, to the other
Summit heads of government
rather than, as proposed, copying
it to them
21/12



solutions to the very severe environmental problems of the developing world; and the need to harness to all these efforts the forces of the market and of competition. The report also stresses the primacy, for the Summit countries, of OECD as a forum for developments in the relationship between environmental and economic policies; and, more generally, the need to work through existing international institutions rather than seek to create new ones. Finally, it invites Heads of State or Government to affirm their commitment to the wise management of environmental resources, the integration of environmental policy into other policies, the importance of market forces and the 'polluter pays principle'.

The meeting briefly discussed the question how the report might be conveyed to the Bonn Summit. My colleagues expressed the hope that it should go as it stands and should not be subject to alteration or gloss on the way. I have heard subsequently that Chancellor Kohl, who has apparently received a favourable account of the meeting, would be pleased if you were to send him a copy of its report. I suggest that it would be right for you to do so, with copies to your other Summit partners. If you agree you might care to write on the lines of the accompanying draft.

Agreed

I am grateful to Dr Nicholson for giving the meeting, by way of background, an oral report on the work which the Technology, Growth and Employment Working Group have been doing under his chairmanship, in response to our own, related but separate, remit from the London Summit.

I am sending copies of this minute and the enclosure to members of the Cabinet and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

P J

PJ

21 December 1984

"THE WAY FORWARD"

"We recognise the international dimension of environmental problems and the role of environmental factors in economic development. We have invited Ministers responsible for environmental policies to identify areas for continuing co-operation in this field".

Extract from Communique from Heads of State or Government at the London Economic Summit, June 1984.

Conclusions by Environment Ministers of Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America together with the Commission of the European Communities.

1. At the invitation of the Heads of State or Government we have considered a number of areas of environmental concern in which international action is currently being undertaken. We have sought to identify themes which should be the mainspring of our continuing co-operation in the future.
2. At our informal meeting in London on 17 December 1984 we agreed that co-operation on individual issues of environmental concern has recently increased at all levels. We stress however that we must intensify this work and keep under continual review its principles and contents so as to ensure that both new and existing concerns are tackled, and changed perceptions are taken into account.
3. We recommend that the next Economic Summit should endorse the basic principle that the fundamental role of the environment should have a central place in our national and international policies. In this context we particularly stress the importance of good husbandry of natural resources to safeguard the basis of production of our economy and to conserve an environment worth living in.

4. We have made encouraging progress in reducing the pollution of air, water and the land. Nevertheless, in spite of these achievements, there is still a need for additional, more effective measures and further efforts. The conclusions reached in 1984 at major international and multilateral conferences with regard to environmental issues should be rapidly put into effect. But we must not neglect the environmental problems which are less visible and more difficult to comprehend. In many cases the impacts of environmental pollution may be subtle, and may become obvious only in the long run. Moreover, the transfer of polluting substances from one sector of the environment to another creates new problems. This phenomenon should be given particular attention.

5. Other major problems are becoming increasingly acute in developing countries, and are in some cases influenced by our own policies. It is essential, in both developing and developed countries, to manage sustainable resources wisely, and to this end we emphasise that prevention of damage is better than repair. This principle is fully effective only in the framework of intensive international co-operation because many of these problems range far more widely than any one of our countries.

6. The appropriate international bodies are already dealing with subjects such as the use of toxic chemicals, management and disposal of hazardous wastes and marine pollution. But there is scope for more urgent and more effective co-operation. There has been a major improvement in international co-operation on air pollution control in the last few years; measures are being taken against acid rain in particular; it continues to be the subject of our intense efforts to ward off threatening dangers. Serious attention is being given to the depletion of the ozone layer and the increased build up of carbon dioxide. But, in the future, we

need to analyse these three problems in their interdependence and, if necessary, devise alternative energy policies. Similarly we believe that some problems arising out of modern agricultural practices need further study and should be treated on a broad international basis. In our own countries, notwithstanding systems for planning and regulating land use, more should be done to balance agricultural development with the sometimes conflicting needs of conserving our natural environment. In developing countries our aim in this respect should be to help to develop environmentally sound agricultural systems as a basis for sustainable development, and we should ensure that our own policies, wherever relevant, are consistent with this. We should give a lead to greater international co-operation on these issues.

7. The tragedy in India, which occurred only a few days before our meeting, emphasised the problems that can attend the transfer of the technology or of hazardous chemicals to developing countries. We are clear that this must be an area for continuing co-operation among our own and other industrialised nations in consultation with developing countries, and we welcome action being taken by OECD to draw up possible guidelines. One suggestion is that there might be jointly agreed government-industry monitoring teams to assess such operations. Further study and discussion are required, but we are clear that our efforts must be directed towards reinforcing the co-operation between developed and developing nations to the mutual benefit of both.

8. We believe more needs to be done to develop new concepts for careful environmental resource management. Risks have to be assessed by appropriate methods; the environmental impacts of our actions should be evaluated. Damage resulting from pollution should be analysed as well as the costs of measures to protect the environment; the results should be taken into account when decisions on environmental policies are taken. Considerable progress has been made by OECD in evolving guidelines to help its members, and we believe that OECD remains the primary place for us to seek to develop further our understanding of the interaction

between economics and environment. The forthcoming Ministerial meeting of the Environment Committee offers a major opportunity for a review of policy.

9. We also recognise that as industrialised countries we have experience and skills in the reduction of environmental pollution which should be shared with those who are only now confronting environmental problems. We acknowledge that the exploitation of the world's resources has to be sustainable in terms of both industry and trade. The need to conserve plant and animal species makes sense in economic as much as in ecological terms. The potential of the countries of the western world must continue to be used as an example for the conservation of an environment worth living in. We need to provide appropriate assistance to developing countries in managing their natural resources and development in a sustainable way. We also need to consider environmental impacts of our own activities in these countries and work actively with them on the wide range of environment/development issues.

10. We invite Heads of State or Government to affirm their commitment to the following main principles for continued co-operation.
 - (i) The resources of the environment constitute both the basis and the limits of economic development; and their wise management is one of the most important components of national and international policies.

 - (ii) Accordingly, environmental policy should be integrated fully into other policies. It should be considered as a fundamental factor when economic decisions are taken. In this context we stress the importance of sustainable development; prevention rather than cure; environmental impact assessment; setting environmental standards on the basis of best technology; and development of less polluting and more cost effective technologies, including those for controlling emissions at source.

- (iii) The mechanisms of the market economy and the forces of competition should be harnessed to solve environmental problems effectively. Environmental protection is feasible only in co-operation with the economic and technological sectors and not in conflict with them.
- (iv) The 'polluter pays principle' is of key importance in ensuring that environmentally correct price and market signals are given, and should be developed and applied more widely.

11. We recommend specific action on the following issues:

- (i) We should intensify co-operation, especially within OECD which we see as the primary instrument of industrialised countries for stimulating work on the relationship between the environment and the economy. In particular we look forward to the Ministerial meeting of OECD's Environment Committee in June 1985 where we will endeavour to secure agreement to progress in deciding the thrust of future environmental policy, including policies for natural resource management.
- (ii) We recognise the major environmental problems faced by developing countries - including rapid population and urban growth, desertification, deforestation, and risks from hazardous chemicals and industrial installations. Our policies and interests interact with theirs and we must work with them for constructive programmes of environmentally sound development and the avoidance of environmental damage and disasters world-wide.
- (iii) We should continue to co-operate actively, bilaterally and in appropriate international bodies, to solve our current preoccupations, notably acid deposition, the possible depletion of stratospheric ozone, the management of toxic chemicals and hazardous wastes, the prevention of

freshwater and marine pollution, the conservation of flora, fauna and genetic resources, and the interactions of industrial, agricultural and conservation policies. But we must also be more forward-looking in addressing emerging environmental issues such as possible climatic changes resulting from human activities, the need to examine alternative energy strategies, and the environmental impact of new forms of industry including biotechnology. Most of these will have to be tackled internationally and on a cross-sectoral basis.

12. We strongly advise against creating new institutions. The emphasis of our work is on continued and improved co-operation within the existing appropriate international bodies. We note the need for these bodies to have unambiguous priorities and effective channels for the implementation of decisions. We welcome the work of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development.

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DRAFT LETTER TO CHANCELLOR KOHL

MEETING OF ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS

You will know that in response to their remit from the London Summit, Environment Ministers and officials representing the Summit countries (with the exception of France) and the European Commission met in London on 17 December, under the chairmanship of the British Secretary of State for the Environment, Patrick Jenkin. I understand that the meeting was generally agreed to have been useful, and I am grateful for the helpful contribution which your own representative, Herr Carl-Dieter Spranger, made to the discussion.

I have pleasure in conveying to you, as the Chairman of the next Summit in Bonn, the accompanying copy of the report which was agreed by the London meeting.

I am sending copies of this letter and the enclosure to all our Summit partners.



He VC

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 January 1985

Meeting of Environment Ministers of Summit Countries,
17 December 1984

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's minute of 21 December, with which he enclosed a draft letter for her to send to Chancellor Kohl.

The Prime Minister is broadly content with the draft, but feels that she should in addition write individually to her other Summit colleagues. I should be grateful if you could provide appropriate drafts as soon as possible. We will hold the letter to Chancellor Kohl meanwhile.

Could you please consult the FCO about the terms of the drafts, particularly the one to President Mitterrand.

I am sending a copy of this letter for information to Peter Ricketts (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

(DAVID BARCLAY)

Andrew Allberry, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.

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STATEMENT

WITH PERMISSION, MR SPEAKER, I SHOULD LIKE TO MAKE A STATEMENT ABOUT THE MEETING ON 6 DECEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS, AT WHICH I WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MY HON FRIEND, THE HON MEMBER FOR COVENTRY SOUTH WEST, PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY. THE COUNCIL EXPRESSED ITS SENSE OF SHOCK AT THE RECENT DISASTER IN BHOPAL, AND CONVEYED ITS DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND THE PEOPLE AFFECTED. THE COUNCIL DISCUSSED LEAD IN PETROL, OTHER VEHICLE EMISSIONS, THE LIMITATION OF NO₂ IN THE ATMOSPHERE, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNITY INFORMATION SYSTEM ON THE ENVIRONMENT, AND DRAFT DIRECTIVES ON EMISSIONS FROM LARGE COMBUSTION PLANTS, EMISSIONS FROM TITANIUM DIOXIDE PLANTS, AND THE RECYCLING OF BEVERAGE CONTAINERS.

ON LEAD IN PETROL, THE COUNCIL REACHED AGREEMENT ON A DIRECTIVE WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF UNLEADED PETROL THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY NOT LATER THAN 1989, OR EARLIER IF INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATES WISH. THE MINIMUM OCTANE LEVELS OF PREMIUM GRADE UNLEADED PETROL WILL BE 95 RON, 85 MON, AT THE PUMP. THE OCTANE NUMBER OF ANY ADDITIONAL UNLEADED REGULAR GRADE WAS LEFT FOR MEMBER STATES TO FIX. FORMAL ADOPTION OF THIS DIRECTIVE MUST NOW AWAIT RECEIPT OF THE OPINION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT.

ON POLLUTING EMISSIONS FROM PETROL-ENGINED VEHICLES, THE COUNCIL AGREED TO ESTABLISH A HIGH-LEVEL WORKING GROUP OF OFFICIALS TO REPORT BY THE END OF JANUARY ON THE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES AVAILABLE TO SECURE REDUCTIONS IN THESE EMISSIONS. THIS WORK WILL PROVIDE THE COUNCIL WITH AN ASSESSMENT OF RELEVANT TECHNOLOGIES AND EXAMINE WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS FOR DIFFERENT SIZE CARS. IT WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ENERGY AND PRODUCTION COSTS AND EUROPEAN TRAFFIC CONDITIONS.

A DIRECTIVE ON AIR QUALITY STANDARDS FOR NITROGEN DIOXIDE WAS AGREED WITH MINOR AMENDMENTS, AND SUBJECT ONLY TO A PARLIAMENTARY RESERVE BY THE UNITED KINGDOM. AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON THE WORDING AND LEGAL BASIS OF THE FIRST PHASE OF AN INFORMATION SYSTEM ON ENVIRONMENTAL DATA IN THE COMMUNITY.

THE THREE OTHER PROPOSED DIRECTIVES - ON EMISSIONS FROM LARGE PLANTS, EMISSIONS FROM THE TITANIUM DIOXIDE INDUSTRY, AND THE RECYCLING OF BEVERAGE CONTAINERS- WERE NOT AGREED. THE UK HAD OBJECTIONS TO ALL THREE; IN NO CASE WERE WE ALONE IN HAVING SUCH OBJECTIONS.

THE COUNCIL ENDORSED A PROPOSAL BY THE UNITED KINGDOM THAT THE COMMISSION SHOULD BE INVITED TO CONSIDER, AND REPORT ON, WAYS OF ENSURING THAT ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE COMMUNITY'S AGRICULTURAL POLICIES. I ALSO RECORDED OUR CONCERN THAT THE COMMISSION'S RECENTLY PROPOSED DIRECTIVE ON MOTORCYCLE NOISE DOES NOT GO FAR ENOUGH IN DEALING WITH THE SMALLER ENGINE CAPACITY MACHINES OR IN SETTING A SUFFICIENTLY EARLY TARGET FOR REDUCTIONS.