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From the Private Secretary

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15 October 1989

Dear Myles,

CLIMATE CHANGE: FOREST SERVICE CHARGES FOR CARBON LOCK-UP

The Prime Minister has considered the paper enclosed with your letter of 13 October which examines the idea that Britain should take the lead in proposing that the International Community should pay a service charge on existing tropical forest areas in developing countries.

The Prime Minister agrees that some further work should be done on this scheme but is fairly sceptical about it. She thinks it most unlikely that we could arrive at conclusions in time for her to put forward a well thought out proposal in her speech to the United Nations General Assembly. At the most, she thinks that she may eventually be able to propose a pilot scheme for a handful of countries. The Prime Minister has noted that it will probably be a better use of money to offer to pay for forest management in a particular area.

I think, therefore, that it would be right to do further work with all due speed: and if it was possible to achieve interdepartmental agreement on a pilot project before the Prime Minister's speech to the UN General Assembly, well and good. But we should not regard the speech as a deadline by which a proposal has to be put forward at all costs.

I am copying this letter to Bob Peirce (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Roger Bright (Department of the Environment), John Gieve (HM Treasury), Andy Lebrecht (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

C. D. POWELL

Myles Wickstead, Esq.  
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DTB