

SUBJECT

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PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. T188/82

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

1 October 1982

Dear Prime Minister

Thank you for your letter of 10 September about the proposed International Year for the Homeless.

Like you, I welcome the attention that the International Year will focus on the plight of the homeless in the world. We continue to respond to requests for assistance in this area from developing countries.

As you know, in addition to the assistance we provide bilaterally, Britain is a major contributor to multilateral agencies within the UN system. At a time when there are already many heavy demands on our aid programme, including of course such major projects as the Victoria Dam, I am afraid that we are unlikely to be able to make an additional contribution towards the costs of an International Year. I am sorry that I cannot give you a more helpful reply.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Thatcher

The Hon. R. Premadasa, M.P.

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HL

Sri Lanka

10 DOWNING STREET

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*From the Private Secretary*

1 October 1982

Thank you for your letter of 29 September enclosing a draft reply to the message from the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka about the International Year for the Homeless. The Prime Minister has now approved and signed the draft which I attach. I should be grateful if you could make arrangements for its transmission.

T. FLESHER

John Holmes, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

HL



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister:

Attached is a  
draft reply and  
an explanatory note  
on the message you  
received from the Prime  
Minister of Sri Lanka  
about the International  
Year of the Handicapped.

JF

29/9



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

29 September, 1982

*Dear Sir,*

*Use Home  
RPM signature  
JH  
2/12*

In response to your letter of 10 September enclosing one which the Prime Minister had received from the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka about the International Year for the Homeless, I enclose / a draft reply. I also attach a background note for information. /

*Yours ever*

*JH Holmes*

(J E Holmes)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street

BACKGROUND

In July 1982, the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) endorsed the recommendations of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT) in respect of the proposed International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987, but on the understanding that the programme for the Year will be financed, in principle, by voluntary contributions and that sufficient pledges to ensure its viability will be obtained before the Year is actually proclaimed. ECOSOC passed an appropriate recommendation to the 37th Session of the General Assembly (now sitting).

2. In general we are against the proliferation of "International Years" as we believe that they tend to devalue the idea and to absorb resources for administration which could be better spent directly meeting a relevant need. It is not our general practice to contribute to the voluntary funds set up to finance these Years as they are often poorly administered and we have no control over funds so contributed.

3. If the UN system goes ahead with the year, our response will depend on the level of public interest. We are unlikely to be able to do more than seek to maximise our response to requests for bilateral assistance for housing projects in the International Year.

Bilateral Coordination Department  
ODA  
28 September 1982

DSR (Revised)

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despach/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM: Prime Minister

Reference

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO: Mr Premadasa  
Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

Thank you for your letter of 10 September about the proposed International Year for the Homeless.

CAVEAT.....

Like you I welcome the attention that the International Year will focus on the plight of the homeless in the world. We continue to respond to requests for assistance in this area from developing countries.

As you know, in addition to the assistance we provide bilaterally, Britain is a major contributor to multilateral agencies within the UN system. At a time when there are already many heavy demands on our aid programme, including of course such major projects as the Victoria Dam, I am afraid that <sup>we are unlikely</sup> to be able to make an additional contribution towards the costs of an International Year. I am sorry that I cannot give you a more helpful reply.

Enclosures—flag(s).....