

Opening statement by John Tomlinson, Permanent Under-Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, on the fisheries negotiations with Poland.

Brussels, 23 February 1977

SPEAKING NOTE FOR MR TOMLINSON'S OPENING STATEMENT
ON THE FISHERIES NEGOTIATIONS WITH POLAND.

1. Welcome to the Polish Delegation.

2. The background against which these negotiations are being held is that a large number of coastal states have taken action to extend their fisheries limits to 200 miles. This development has become so widespread that other coastal states including the member states of the Community, have been obliged to take similar action themselves.

3. In recognition of this trend and of the need to take effective measures to safeguard fishery resources, which in recent years have been seriously depleted, the member states of the Community agreed in October that they would extend their fisheries limits in the North Sea and Atlantic to 200 miles from 1 January 1977. This agreement was recorded in a resolution of the Council of 3 November 1976.

It was agreed also that, as from the same date, the exploitation by vessels of states not members of the EEC of fishery resources within the waters now coming under the fisheries jurisdiction of members should be governed by agreements between the Community and the countries concerned. The Council instructed the Commission to start negotiations with the third countries concerned in accordance with the directives adopted by the Council. In so doing the member states are acting in conformity with international law, and in defence of their legitimate interests.

4. The Netherlands Presidency of the Community informed the Polish Government of the contents of the Council resolution of 3 November and of the Community's desire for negotiations. The Community noted that, in its reply to this communication, the Polish Government expressed its readiness to enter into broad cooperation in the field of protection, conservation and management of the living resources in the areas of high seas, which would fall within jurisdiction of the coastal states. However, as it was not possible for suitable arrangements agreed with the third countries concerned to come into operation at the beginning of 1977, and in order to allow time for negotiations with third countries to take place, the Council agreed to establish quotas for the third countries concerned to apply for the first three months of 1977 in most cases. The decisions taken on the level of quotas were in accordance with the Community's

6. In regard to the negotiations which begin today, the Community is happy to welcome Poland here. The manner in which these negotiations will be handled on the side of the Community, with a view to concluding an agreement between the Community and Poland, has already been explained to the Polish authorities. The United Kingdom heads the Community delegation in its capacity as the country exercising the Presidency of the Council of the European Communities. The representatives of the Commission are part of the Community delegation and will present the positions of the Community, in view of the fact that in the Community the Commission is competent to conduct negotiations with third countries in this field.

7. This session of negotiations is being held at Ministerial level but thereafter the negotiations, as is normal for the Community, will be conducted at official level. Mr Paul Scott, on behalf of the Presidency, will be head of the Community delegation and Mr Simonet will represent the Commission therein.

8. I am sorry that my own presence at this negotiation has to be so short. But the death of Mr Crosland and the appointment of Dr David Owen as Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary makes this a particularly busy time. The Presidency will be continuing to head the Community side in these negotiations, and I know that British Ministers will continue to keep in the closest touch with the negotiations as they proceed.