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To: Members of the Executive Board

From: The Acting Secretary

Subject: Announcement of the Ministers of Finance and Central Bank Governors of France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States

There is attached for the information of the Executive Directors an announcement of the Ministers of Finance and Central Bank Governors of France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, issued on September 22, 1985.

Att: (1)

Other Distribution:
Department Heads

September 22, 1985

<u>Announcement of the Ministers of Finance and Central Bank Governors of France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States</u>

1. Ministers of Finance and Central Bank Governors of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States met today, September 22, 1985, in the context of their agreement to conduct mutual surveillance and as part of their preparations for wider international discussions at the forthcoming meetings in Seoul, Korea. They reviewed economic developments and policies in each of their countries and assessed their implications for economic prospects, external balances, and exchange rates.

2. At the Bonn Economic Summit in May 1985 the Heads of State or Government of seven major industrial countries and the President of the Commission of the European Communities issued an Economic Declaration Towards Sustained Growth and Higher Employment. In that Declaration the participants agreed that:

> The best contribution we can make to a lasting new prosperity in which all nations can share is unremittingly to pursue, individually in our own countries and cooperatively together, policies conducive to sustained growth and higher employment.

3. The Ministers and Governors were of the view that significant progress has been made in their efforts to promote a convergence of favorable economic performance among their countries on a path of steady noninflationary growth. Furthermore, they concluded that their countries are restoring the vitality and responsiveness of their economies. As a result of these developments, they are confident that a firm basis has been established for a sustained, more balanced expansion among their countries. This sustained growth will benefit other industrial countries and will help ensure expanding export markets for developing countries, thereby contributing importantly to the resolution of problems of heavily indebted developing countries.

4. They believe that this convergence of favorable economic performance has been influenced increasingly by policy initiatives undertaken by their countries. Moreover, each of their countries is committed to the implementation of further policy measures which will reinforce favorable convergence and strengthen the sustainability of the current expansion.

5. Ministers and Governors were of the view that recent shifts in fundamental economic conditions among their countries, together with policy commitments for the future, have not been reflected fully in exchange markets.

Recent Economic Developments and Policy Changes

6. Ministers and Governors expect that real growth in aggregate for their countries will be about 3 percent this year, compared to negative growth of -0.7 percent in 1982. Although this figure is down slightly from 1984, growth will be more balanced than at any time in the last four years. After the particularly rapid U.S. growth of 1983-84, there is now increased evidence of internal growth in the other countries. In particular, private investment has picked up strength. The current expansion is occurring in a context of fiscal consolidation; it is not dependent on shortlived fiscal stimulus. As a result of the changes in the components of growth, real growth in their countries can be expected to remain strong as U.S. growth moderates.

7. The current sustained expansion is occurring within a framework of declining inflation, a phenomenon that is unprecedented in the past three decades. Inflation rates are at their lowest in nearly 20 years, and they show no signs of reviving.

8. There has been a significant fall in interest rates in recent years. Apart from welcome domestic effects, this has been particularly helpful in easing the burden of debt repayments for developing countries.

9. This successful performance is the direct result of the importance given to macroeconomic policies which have reduced inflation and inflationary expectations, to continued vigilance over government spending, to greater emphasis on market forces and competition, and to prudent monetary policies.

10. These positive economic developments notwithstanding, there are large imbalances in external positions which pose potential problems, and which reflect a wide range of factors. Among these are: the deterioration in its external position which the U.S. experienced from its period of very rapid relative growth; the particularly large impact on the U.S. current account of the economic difficulties and the adjustment efforts of some major developing countries; the difficulty of trade access in some markets; and the appreciation of the U.S. dollar. The interaction of these factors -- relative growth rates, the debt problems of developing countries, and exchange rate developments -- has contributed to large, potentially destabilizing external imbalances among major industrial countries. In particular, the United States has a large and growing current account deficit, and Japan, and to a lesser extent Germany, large and growing current account surpluses.

11. The U.S. current account deficit, together with other factors, is now contributing to protectionist pressures which, if not resisted, could lead to mutually destructive retaliation with serious damage to the world economy: world trade would shrink, real growth rates could even turn negative, unemployment would rise still higher, and debt-burdened developing countries would be unable to secure the export earnings they vitally need.

Policy Intentions

12. The Finance Ministers and Governors affirmed that each of their countries remains firmly committed to its international responsibilities and obligations as leading industrial nations. They also share special responsibilities to ensure the mutual consistency of their individual policies. The Ministers agreed that establishing more widely strong, noninflationary domestic growth and open markets will be a key factor in ensuring that the current expansion continues in a more balanced fashion, and they committed themselves to policies toward that end. In countries where the budget deficit is too high, further measures to reduce the deficit substantially are urgently required.

13. Ministers and Governors agreed that it was essential that protectionist pressures be resisted.

14. Ministers recognized the importance of providing access to their markets for LDC exports as those countries continue their essential adjustment efforts, and saw this as an important additional reason to avoid protectionist policies. They welcomed the GATT preparatory meeting scheduled for late September and expressed their hope that it will reach a broad consensus on subject matter and modalities for a new GATT round.

15. In this context, they recalled and reaffirmed the statement in the Bonn Economic Declaration on the debt situation.

> Sustained growth in world trade, lower interest rates, open markets and continued financing in amounts and on terms appropriate to each individual case are essential to enable developing countries to achieve sound growth and overcome their economic and financial difficulties.

16. The Ministers agreed that they would monitor progress in achieving a sustained noninflationary expansion and intensify their individual and cooperative efforts to accomplish this objective. To that end, they affirmed the statements of policy intentions by each of their countries, which are attached.

Conclusions

17. The Ministers of Finance and Central Bank Governors agreed that recent economic developments and policy changes, when combined with the specific policy intentions described in the attached statements, provide a sound basis for continued and a more balanced expansion with low inflation. They agreed on the importance of these improvements for redressing the large and growing external imbalances that have developed. In that connection, they noted that further market-opening measures will be important to resisting protectionism.

18. The Ministers and Governors agreed that exchange rates should play a role in adjusting external imbalances. In order to do this, exchange rates should better reflect fundamental economic conditions than has been the case. They believe that agreed policy actions must be implemented and reinforced to improve the fundamentals further, and that in view of the present and prospective changes in fundamentals, some further orderly appreciation of the main non-dollar currencies against the dollar is desirable. They stand ready to cooperate more closely to encourage this when to do so would be helpful.

The French Government intends to pursue its policy aimed at reducing inflation, moderating income growth, and achieving continued improvements in external accounts. It will further intensify its efforts to speed up structural adjustment and modernization and thus lay the basis for job creating growth.

Therefore, it is determined:

1. To pursue vigorously disinflation.

2. To secure the attainment of monetary aggregates growth targets, consistent with decelerating inflation.

3. To curb public expenditures progressively so as to lower the tax burden while reducing the government borrowing requirement.

4. To foster the investment recovery allowed for by the improved financial situation in the business sector.

5. To take further steps towards liberalization and modernization of financial markets, to increase competition in the financial sector so as to reduce financial intermediation costs and give a greater role to interest rates in monetary control.

6. To foster job creation through the implementation of an innovative and active policy in the field of education and training and by promoting constructive discussions between social partners on work organization.

7. To resist protectionism.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, noting that the German economy is already embarked on a course of steady economic recovery based increasingly on internally generated growth, will continue to implement policies to sustain and extend the progress achieved in strengthening the underlying conditions for continuing, vigorous, job-creating growth in the context of stable prices and low interest rates.

In particular, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany will implement policies with the following explicit intentions.

1. The priority objective of fiscal policy is to encourage private initiative and productive investments and maintain price stability.

2. Toward this end, the Federal Government will continue to reduce progressively the share of the public sector in the economy through maintaining firm expenditure control. The tax cuts due to take effect in 1986 and 1988 form part of the ongoing process of tax reform and reduction which the Federal Government will continue in a medium-term framework.

3. The Federal Government will continue to remove rigidities inhibiting the efficient functioning of markets. It will keep under review policies, regulations, and practices affecting labor markets in order to enhance the positive impact of economic growth on employment. The Federal Government and the Deutsche Bundesbank will provide the framework for the continuing evolution of deep, efficient money and capital markets.

4. The fiscal policy of the Federal Government and the monetary policy of the Deutsche Bundesbank will continue to ensure a stable environment conducive to the expansion of domestic demand on a durable basis.

5. The Federal Government will continue to resist protectionism.

The Government of Japan, noting that the Japanese economy is in an autonomous expansion phase mainly supported by domestic private demand increase, will continue to institute policies intended to ensure sustainable noninflationary growth; provide full access to domestic markets for foreign goods; and internationalize the yen and liberalize domestic capital markets.

In particular, the Government of Japan will implement policies with the following explicit intentions.

1. Resistance of protectionism and steady implementation of the Action Program announced on July 30 for the further opening up of Japan's domestic market to foreign goods and services.

2. Full utilization of private sector vitality through the implementation of vigorous deregulation measures.

3. Flexible management of monetary policy with due attention to the yen rate.

4. Intensified implemention of financial market liberalization and internationalization of the yen, so that the yen fully reflects the underlying strength of the Japanese economy.

5. Fiscal policy will continue to focus on the twin goals of reducing the central government deficit and providing a pro-growth environment for the private sector. Within that framework, local governments may be favorably allowed to make additional investments in this FY 1985, taking into account the individual circumstances of the region.

6. Efforts to stimulate domestic demand will focus on increasing private consumption and investment through measures to enlarge consumer and mortgage credit markets.

The United Kingdom Government, noting that the British economy has been experiencing steady growth of output and domestic demand over the past four years, will continue to pursue policies designed to reduce inflation; to promote sustained growth of output and employment; to reduce the size of the public sector; to encourage a more competitive, innovative, market orientated private sector; to reduce regulation and increase incentives throughout the economy; and to maintain open trading and capital markets free of foreign exchange controls.

In particular, the United Kingdom Government intends:

1. To operate monetary policy to achieve further progress towards price stability and to provide a financial environment for growing output and employment; and to buttress monetary policy with a prudent fiscal policy.

2. To continue to reduce public expenditure as a share of GDP and to transfer further substantial parts of public sector industry to private ownership.

3. To reduce the burden of taxation in order to improve incentives and to increase the efficient use of resources in the economy.

4. To take additional measures to improve the effective working of the labour market, including the reform of Wages Councils and improvements in youth training; and implement proposals to liberalize and strengthen competition within financial markets.

5. To resist protectionism.