

ATTENTION: DIANNE LIVINGSTONE



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

4 May 1983

In view of the success of the National Economic Summit and the Government's intention to establish the Economic Planning Advisory Council, the Government has decided to end the practice of holding formal pre-Budget consultations with major community, business and employee organisations.

The Economic Planning Advisory Council (EPAC) is intended to continue the process of consultation and information exchange begun at the Summit, and to provide broadly-based machinery for the development and exchange of views on economic policy and the medium and longer term economic outlook.

It will enable more regular and informative discussions to be held than the existing arrangements in respect of pre-Budget consultations.

A representative working party has been established to advise the Government on the appropriate form and function of EPAC.

Details of the Government's decisions on these matters will be announced soon.

As well as these formal arrangements for consultation, I expect informal discussions, including on a bilateral basis, to be greatly increased under my Government.

As I said at the Summit:

"I say to you now on behalf of each one of my Ministers, that they stand ready to help you, irrespective of your industrial, political or social affiliation. Equally, their doors are open to each of you and I trust that in the days, weeks, months and years ahead you will take advantage of that unequivocal offer and statement. In the same way, with what I understand is your welcome permission, we will seek to do that so that, in a direct sense, we may, as a Government and as individual Ministers, continue to be able to draw upon your reserves of knowledge and experience that you have so freely and graciously made available to all of us during this week".

However, these undertakings are not limited to Summit participants.

The Government has a genuine commitment to consult and is keen to hear the views of groups and individuals in the community.

I believe that the availability of my Ministers for informal consultation and the formal machinery we intend to establish make it unnecessary to continue with the pre-Budget consultations, which had proved less than fully satisfactory from all points of view.