To   : His Excellency J.R. Jayewardene, President of Sri Lanka.

From   : Dr. Mohan Munasinghe, Chairman, National Computer Policy
                Committee. MM

Subject   : Preliminary Assessment of Potential Microcomputer
                Applications in the Presidential Secretariat.

     The Computer and Information Technology Council of Sri Lanka Act is in its final draft stage and currently being reviewed by the Attorney General's Department. One of our principal national computer policy objectives is to encourage and facilitate the use of computer in the government sector. It is especially important that Your Excellency continue to provide the necessary impetus and encouragement for these efforts, as in the past. In particular, I feel that there are many functions in the Presidential Secretariat which would be greatly enhanced and facilitated through the use of a small and inexpensive microcomputer.

     In the event that such a suggestion provokes anxiety or opposition among the more traditionally-minded members of the Secretariat staff, I would like to point out that a microcomputer is simply a useful tool, like the motor car. An automobile facilitates movement from one place to another and thereby improve human efficiency and productivity. It does not make human beings redundant. At the same time one does not have to be an expert mechanic in order to make use of a car. In fact one does not even need a driver's licence, if a trained chauffer is available to perform this function. Similarly a relatively uncomplicated microcomputer can greatly enhance and simplify the work of many members of the Secretariat, while requiring only minimal technical or specialised knowledge. In most cases, only a knowldge of basic English and ability to press buttons on a key-board would be sufficient to carry out most of the tasks on a microcomputer.

     Accordingly, Your Excellency's approval is sought to make a preliminary assessment of whether a microcomputer could be usefully introduced into the Presidential Secretariat, in order to help us in our work. I, for one, would find such a machine most useful in :-

     (a) cataloguing, classifying and retrieving information;

     (b) preparing letters, reports and other documents;

and   (c) analysing data.

     If such a preliminary investigation confirms the case for acquiring a microcomputer, I am confident that there are many potential donors who would be most pleased to make such a machine available to us at no cost, or at a greatly reduced price.

This may be discussed with Sec & P.S.

JW 15/11/83