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JONATHAN Porritt, probably every executive's favourite green bogeyman, punctured the air of self-complacence at a green business conference yesterday when he told the audience that British business is "unacceptably slow", he said, citing the reluctance of British businesses to set specific targets for environmental performance, commit staff and resources, and submit to external audit.

Mr Porritt also warned that voluntary business action was not enough. And his call for government action was surprisingly echoed by environment minister Chris Patten. Mr Patten said that market forces alone were inadequate to produce sustainable development, which he said was now "a reality for all of us".

They were speaking at the launch of an executive guide to environmental action, published by Business in the Environment - a project established by Business in the Community with the encouragement of its president, Prince Charles.

Prince Charles, who makes a brief appearance in an accompanying video which stars John Cleese and Peter Davison, told the audience of over 30 business leaders that it was in their interest to be environmentally responsible. "Safeguarding the environment is an integral part of good business practice", the Prince said, emphasising the main message of the guide and the video.

He called for businesses to publish details of emissions, which would force executives to say environmental could be taught in business schools. In a message to shareholders, he also