



Foreign, Commonwealth
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Dear Mr Webster,

Thank you for your letter of 22 May to the Foreign Secretary. The Correspondence and Parliamentary Questions Unit in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has been asked to reply. We apologise for the delay in responding.

Thank you for sharing the policy resolutions adopted on 23 April by the United Nations Association, London and South East Region. We are grateful for the ongoing work of the United Nations Association in building support for an effective United Nations. We have consulted widely across the FCDO and have provided updates where you have requested information/calls for government action:

Afghanistan's assets

We appreciate the concern you have about those affected by the situation in Afghanistan and the US announcement regarding the transfer of funds held in US banks by the Afghan Central Bank into a consolidated account held at the Federal Reserve that will be released for the benefit of the people of Afghanistan. However, this is a decision taken by the US administration and a US matter.

The UK is working closely with the World Bank, the US and other donors to develop an approach to supporting basic health services and education without strengthening the Taliban. In January, we successfully worked with the Asian Development Bank to make \$405 million available and on 1 March, the World Bank Board agreed to make the remaining \$1 billion in the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund available for health, education, livelihoods, and food security.

Atrocity prevention

As set out in the Integrated Review, the UK Government is committed to taking a more integrated approach to work on conflict and instability, placing greater emphasis on addressing the drivers of atrocity crimes and strengthening fragile countries' resilience to external influence and delivering greater support to peace processes. Therefore, we have not had a separate atrocity prevention strategy, but we are keen to learn from best practice and may review this in the future.

We strongly support the UN principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), focusing on the responsibility of MS to protect its population from atrocities, which was endorsed by all UN Member States (MS) at the UN World Summit in New York in 2005. The UK is a member of the Group of Friends of R2P in New York and Geneva.

Recent examples of cross-governmental atrocity prevention work include the joint FCDO-MoD National Action Plan for WPS and on work related to Children and Armed Conflict, and collaboration between FCDO, the Home Office (HO) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on issues concerning hate crime policy and faith policy. HO and DLUHC regularly participate alongside FCDO in meetings at the UN, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and Council of Europe to address the issue of hate crime at an international level.

Climate

As stated in the Integrated Review 'tackling climate change and biodiversity loss is the number one international priority for this government'.

Access to climate finance is a key priority for many climate vulnerable developing countries with current mechanisms for accessing public climate finance often being slow, complex and resource intensive.

UK assistance is making a difference: since 2011 UK International Climate Finance (ICF) has helped over 88 million people cope with the effects of climate change and installed 2,400 megawatts of clean energy. This supports developing countries to adapt to the impacts of climate change and adopt clean growth pathways, reducing or avoiding carbon emissions. Going forward, the UK has pledged to double our ICF to at least £11.6bn between 2021/22 and 2025/26. Within this, at least £3bn is to protect and restore nature and biodiversity. The UK is committed to a balanced split between support for adaptation and mitigation through our climate finance.

Climate change and its impact on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

In the CHOGM communique ([here](#)), Heads underscored the importance of the threat of climate change, stressing the urgency of enhancing ambition and action in relation to mitigation, adaptation, and finance in this critical decade. Among issues mentioned, Heads referenced the need for enhanced and additional support for activities addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change in developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to these effects.

Cybersecurity

The UK is committed to shaping global governance in pursuit of a free, open, peaceful and secure cyberspace, as set out in the Integrated Review and National Cyber Strategy. We will continue to work with international partners to set the 'rules of the road' to ensure that cyberspace is governed by rules and norms that enhance collective security, promote democratic values, support global economic growth, and counter the spread of digital authoritarianism.

The UK is a co-sponsor of the Programme of Action (PoA) alongside 60 other states. The PoA is a French-Egyptian proposal for a permanent, action-oriented new mechanism to focus on *implementation* of the UN framework for responsible state behaviour in Cyberspace. We see an important role for the PoA in implementing norms,

which would allow the UN to focus its efforts on ensuring we drive forth progress on the agreed norms.

All Commonwealth countries benefitted from UK cyber security capacity building activity during the UK's term as Chair-in-Office (2018-2022). To date, we have invested over £15m, held over 130 events in 32 countries and trained over 6000 people. The UK has further announced future investment of £15m to continue to help implement the Commonwealth Cyber Declaration on a range of levels.

The UK is proud to sponsor the Women in Cyber Fellowship. Established in 2019, the fellowship aims to address the need for a greater proportion of representation from women at UN negotiations concerning cyberspace. In 2021 the UK increased the number of women from Commonwealth countries in Africa and South Asia it is supporting through the fellowship from fourteen to twenty-five.

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR)

The UK Government remains deeply concerned about the situation in Hong Kong. Actions taken by the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities, including the imposition of the National Security Law, constitute clear and serious breaches of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The UK has expressed our grave concern over the steady erosion of political and civil rights and Hong Kong's autonomy, including in response to the Legislative Council elections in December 2021 and following the selection process for the Chief Executive in May 2022.

We will continue to bring together our like-minded partners to stand up for the people of Hong Kong, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms, and to hold China to the international obligations it freely assumed under international law.

How did Dag Hammarskjold die?

The UK remains fully committed to supporting the Dag Hammarskjold enquiry and continues to cooperate fully with the investigation. All documents held by the UK Government that contain information relevant to the inquiry into the death of the late Secretary-General have been identified and submitted to the Inquiry

Nuclear weapons

We have noted the P5 declaration that **nuclear war** cannot be won and must never be fought. We call for the UK to participate as an observer at the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons meeting planned for June and to contribute constructively to the NPT Review in August, including by committing to No First Use of UK nuclear weapons.

We reaffirm our commitment to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons, in line with our obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We firmly believe the best way to achieve this is through gradual multilateral disarmament negotiated through the NPT. The UK's position on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has been clear. We will not sign or ratify the treaty, nor did we send observers to the First Meeting of States Parties. The TPNW fails to address the key issues that must be overcome to achieve lasting global disarmament. It offers no solutions to the challenges posed by a deteriorating security environment, nor the technical challenges of verifying nuclear disarmament without proliferating knowledge pertaining to nuclear weapons. We look forward to working with all states on

nuclear disarmament at the upcoming Tenth Review Conference of the NPT and beyond.

Oceans

The UK is at the forefront of marine protection with 374 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) protecting 38% of UK waters. In English waters there are 178 sites protecting 40% of our seas. We have built a comprehensive network of MPAs and are focusing on making sure they are protected properly.

The UK also serves as Ocean Co-chair of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature & People alongside France and Costa Rica, in support of 30by30 for both land and ocean.

Between the two alliances, over 110 countries have pledged to support the 30by30 ocean target at COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity later this year, and we are inviting everyone to join us.

Our world after the pandemic

We have updated our pandemic policy to urge a rapid conclusion to the WTO negotiations in favour of vaccines, testing and therapeutics manufacture in developing countries without patent holder permission for the duration of the pandemic.

We are wholeheartedly committed to addressing vaccine equity on every front, including through our trade policy. We have demonstrated this through our sponsorship and promotion of the Trade and Health Initiative (TAHI), as well as the unilateral measures we have taken – including tariff suspensions.

Challenges to vaccine equity lie with manufacturing constraints; supply chain issues such as export restrictions and tariff barriers; pressure on health systems to administer available vaccines; vaccine confidence; and regulatory issues. Waiving IP rights would not overcome these challenges

The Balfour Declaration

The UK's opposition to Israeli settlements in the West Bank is long-standing and well known. The UK is clear that settlements are contrary to international humanitarian law. The UK regularly raises our opposition to settlements, demolitions and evictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories with the Government of Israel. We have called on Israel to end this practice.

The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace. Bilateral recognition by itself will not end the occupation. We continue to work closely with international partners to encourage a return to meaningful negotiations.

We firmly believe a just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. We will continue to press Israel and the Palestinians strongly on the need to refrain from taking actions, which make peace more difficult. The UK remains committed to the two-state solution as the best way to bring peace and stability to the region.

Second Voluntary National Review of the UN Sustainable Development Goals

The International Development Strategy and Integrated Review reaffirm our commitment to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The UK's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) provided a comprehensive account of actions being taken across the UK by government and other actors. No decision has been made about a follow-up to the 2019 VNR.

We regularly engage stakeholders on implementation of the SDGs. As you may be aware, the BOND SDG Group and UN Global Compact UK will this year be publishing reviews on the UK's SDG progress.

All government departments remain responsible for delivering the SDGs as they relate to their portfolios. Departments published Outcome Delivery Plans on 15 July 2021, which highlight how they are supporting the delivery of the SDGs. For further information on domestic SDG delivery, we recommend looking at departmental 2021-22 Annual Reports and Accounts, which will be published later this year, or reaching out directly to relevant departments.

Sri Lanka

The UK will continue to work with our Core Group partners through the framework provided by resolution 46/1 for international engagement on human rights in Sri Lanka. The resolution calls on the government of Sri Lanka to make progress on accountability and human rights, and stresses the importance of a comprehensive accountability process for all violations and abuses committed in Sri Lanka.

We welcome reports by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as part of the enhanced reporting mechanism provided by resolution 46/1. We continue to make clear our concerns about human rights in Sri Lanka at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), most recently on 14 June. The Minister responsible for South Asia, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, also raised human rights and accountability when he met Foreign Minister Peiris on 15 June in Geneva. It remains UK Government policy that any judgement on whether genocide have occurred is a matter for a competent national or international court after consideration of all the available evidence, rather than for governments or non-judicial bodies.

Strengthening training and leadership for UN peacekeeping and peace-building missions

In support of improving peacekeeping performance, the UK provides training to troop and police contributing countries, particularly in Africa, through the British Peace Support Team Africa (BPST). BPST provide training to around 10,000 peacekeepers annually, ahead of deployments to UN missions.

Recent examples of the UK supporting UN training include providing a UK military and police officer to the UN to support the drafting of new training on tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and deploying a senior UK expert to the UN team reviewing the counter-improvised explosive device capability in UN peacekeeping operations.

Syria

In Syria, as in Ukraine, there can be no impunity for violations of international and humanitarian and human rights law. The UK will continue to provide leadership in holding perpetrators to account. The UK strongly supports the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) and on 10 March signed a MoU with the IIIM, and reiterated its support to the IIIM on their address to the UN General Assembly on 1 April 2022, on the occasion of their 8th report.

The UK is one of the largest bilateral donors to the Syria crisis having committed over £3.8 billion to date; our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. We are proud this country is helping millions of Syrians with food, clean water, health care and education.

The UK strongly supports the renewal of UNSCR 2585 to maintain cross-border aid access into Syria and calls on all parties to respect agreed ceasefires. The UK will continue to support UN efforts to avert a humanitarian crisis. We therefore urge all members of the UN Security Council to vote in favour of renewing and expanding this vital resolution in July to avoid an even greater deterioration of the dire humanitarian situation.

UK Aid Budget

The UK is one of the largest bilateral donors to the crisis in Ukraine, having pledged ODA support of around £400 million in economic and humanitarian grant support for Ukraine, including £220 million of humanitarian assistance in response to this crisis.

In addition to humanitarian support for Ukraine, the UK continues to provide humanitarian support around the world and works to strengthen the effectiveness of the global humanitarian system. We will prioritise our humanitarian funding at £3 billion over the next three years and will continue to support humanitarian multilateral aid agencies, such as the United Nations, through core contributions.

Ukraine Crisis

The United Kingdom is resolute in its support of Ukraine's territorial integrity and we will remain at Ukraine's side as it emerges as a strong and thriving democracy. We have led on support for Ukraine during the war and will continue to lead in supporting the Ukrainian government's Reconstruction and Development Plan. We have made clear to President Zelenskyy that every country has a duty to help Ukraine in their struggle for freedom, both now and in the long-term.

Since Putin's invasion of Ukraine, we have sanctioned over 1000 Russian and Belarusian individuals and over 110 businesses at the heart of, or supporting, Putin's regime. Sanctions imposed by the UK and our international partners are having deep and damaging consequences for Putin's ability to wage war with around £275 billion, 60% of Russian foreign currency reserves, currently frozen. Several of Russia's weapons manufacturers have suspended their activities completely or partially due to sanctions and the lack of spare parts and components. Sanctions against companies such as Kronshtadt, the main producer of drones used in Ukraine, are making it harder for Russia to resupply its front line.

We took the lead in the removal of 7 Russian banks from SWIFT. New powers also enable us to ban Russian state and private companies from raising funds in the UK, banning dealing with their securities and making loans to them. We have frozen the assets of Russian banks, including Sberbank and Credit Bank of Moscow, with global assets of £500 billion. Over 3 million Russian companies are now barred from raising money on UK capital markets.

We are moving as quickly as possible to ensure that those fleeing horrific persecution in Ukraine can find safety in the UK through the [Ukraine Family Scheme](#) and [Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme](#). The Home Office is responsible for visas and migration, including the processing of visa applications under both these schemes. Further enquiries on these matters should be directed to the Home Office.

Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

The UK is committed to championing the WPS agenda including through promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of peace and security, as per UNSC 1325 and associated resolutions. We will continue to do this as part of our new National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security which we intend to launch at the international Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative conference in November.

We recognise the importance of supporting Women Human Rights Defenders and women peacebuilders, including through funding. In 2021, we provided an additional £3 million to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, on top of our existing £22 million contribution, announced in November last year. We also recognise the importance of core, flexible funding for the sustainability and security of women's rights organisations (WROs) and were pleased to provide £1 million of core, flexible funding to WROs in conflict affected states in 2021 to support this through the CSSF.

We welcome your call for the Murad Code to be implemented for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). In April, Lord Ahmad, the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, chaired a UN Security Council Open Debate on CRSV to press for stronger global action and launch the UK-funded Murad Code, which sets out how to collect information from survivors safely and effectively.

Yours sincerely,

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