



House of Commons
Foreign Affairs Committee

**Tilting horizons: the
Integrated Review
and the Indo-Pacific –
Government Response
to the Committee’s
Eighth Report of
Session 2022–23**

**Fourth Special Report of Session
2023–24**

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Foreign Affairs Committee

The Foreign Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and its associated public bodies.

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Fourth Special Report

The Foreign Affairs Committee published its Eighth Report of Session 2022–23, [Tilting horizons: the Integrated Review and the Indo-Pacific](#) (HC 172) on 30 August 2023. The Government Response was received on 4 March 2024 and is appended below.

Appendix: Government Response

INTRODUCTION

1. The Government has considered the Foreign Affairs Committee’s report “Tilting horizons: the Integrated Review and the Indo Pacific” published on 30 August 2023. The Government has examined the recommendations in detail.

The Indo-Pacific’s strategic importance to the UK

2. The Indo-Pacific matters to the UK. It is home to half of the world’s people. At least 1.7 million British citizens live in the region. 60% of global shipping trade passes through the Indo-Pacific and five of the top ten greenhouse gas emitting countries are located in the region. The Indo-Pacific is key to delivering the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and the region is off track to achieve any of the 17 goals by 2030.

3. Between 2021 and 2050, 54% of global growth and advances in key technologies are expected to come from the Indo-Pacific, providing opportunities for UK businesses and jobs at home. Global rules and norms that are so important for our prosperity and security will be decided in significant part in the Indo-Pacific.

4. It is for these reasons the Integrated Review Refresh (IRR) 2023 outlines our vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific. We have made the Indo-Pacific a permanent pillar of the UK’s international policy.

5. The Government welcomes the Committee’s recognition of the strategic importance of this region to the UK’s long-term prosperity, security and development objectives. Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine and recent events in the Middle East underscore the IRR’s conclusion that the world is becoming more volatile and contested. The challenge for UK foreign policy is to remain focussed on long-term UK objectives like the Indo-Pacific and, at the same time, remain engaged at the appropriate level on other priority issues as well as crises as and when they emerge.

Implementing the UK’s Indo-Pacific Approach

6. The Government has made good progress in delivering results. We have strengthened bilateral relationships through our commitments under the Hiroshima (Japan) and Downing Street Accords (RoK), our bilateral roadmaps with India and Indonesia, and our Strategic Partnership with Singapore. We have deepened our partnership with ASEAN by agreeing our Plan of Action, bolstered trade relationships through Free Trade Agreements and signing the Protocol of Accession to CPTPP and embedded defence and security partnerships through AUKUS and the Global Combat Air Programme.

7. We are tackling shared global challenges such as development and climate change as identified in the Development White Paper. This includes implementing Just Energy Transition Programmes with Indonesia and Vietnam and investing £500 million through British International Investment in climate finance. Efficient implementation is now key.

The UK's strategic objectives

8. Our objective of a free and open Indo-Pacific where countries can make choices free from coercion, where territorial integrity is respected and disputes are resolved in line with international law is very clear.

9. Similarly, the Government has set out our approach to China: protecting our national security; aligning with our allies and partners; and engaging with China where it is in UK interests to do so. I do not believe there is a need to publish an additional China Strategy and we have not committed to do so. The National Security Secretariat within the Cabinet Office coordinates the implementation of our approach to China across government. This allows for a coherent view across the extent of China's activity, allowing the Government to prioritise work, assess trade-offs, mitigate risks and deliver across all departments. We will continue to maintain as much transparency as possible and keep Parliament informed of our approach towards China.

Resources

10. Finally, we are putting in place the right tools and resources to equip the Government, including the FCDO, to deliver in the long-term including: doubling the number of British High Commissions across the Pacific Island Countries, opening UK Missions to ASEAN and the Maldives; and doubling funding for our China Capabilities Programme.

11. This paper sets out the Government's response to each of the Committee's specific conclusions and recommendations. The Committee's text is in bold and the Government's response is below. Paragraph numbers in bold relate to the numbering in the conclusions and recommendations section of the Committee's report.

EVOLUTION OF THE TILT

1: The Indo-Pacific Tilt served to confirm an existing trend of increasing engagement with countries in the Indo-Pacific region and demonstrated the intent of Government to persist with and deepen this engagement in the long term. However, there has been no explanation of the outcomes that the Government expects from the Tilt policy. The Government's inability to set out clearly the long-term objectives and outcomes of the Tilt, either in the form of a written strategy, or even before this Committee, risks failing to meaningfully deter the risks to UK sovereignty from a more aggressive People's Republic of China (PRC), and to take full advantage of the opportunities of greater engagement with the Indo-Pacific. (Paragraph 20)

2: Therefore, we welcome the Foreign Secretary's recognition that delivery of the Tilt's outcomes is by no means complete, that his statement provides long-term intent, and that the Government will be keen to ensure that it is supported by a correspondingly long-term shift in resources and a clearer enunciation of the outcomes to be achieved in coming decades. (Paragraph 23)

4: We welcome the realistic and pragmatic response in the Refresh to recent geopolitical events and trends, in particular the primary focus on the Euro-Atlantic and the establishment of the Indo-Pacific as a permanent pillar of the UK's international policy. (Paragraph 26)

6: [The Refresh states that the Tilt was pursued largely through non-military instruments, such as diplomacy, trade, development, technological exchange and engagement with regional organisations, with only a modest increase in defence spending.] This stress on the use of diplomatic instruments should continue to the extent possible, alongside effective deterrence to minimise the risk of armed conflict. (Paragraph 29)

7: It is not yet clear whether the Tilt has achieved a permanent rebalancing of UK foreign policy. It will only have done so if prioritisation is maintained consistently over a long period during which relationships can be built and sustained on the basis of the original Tilt. (Paragraph 30)

8: We welcome the acceptance in the Refresh of our recommendation that the Government work away from the word "tilt" to describe its policy towards the Indo-Pacific while continuing to prioritise the region. We also welcome the list of additional actions the Government proposes to take to implement its newly-described policy of making the Indo-Pacific region a permanent pillar of UK foreign policy. We recommend that these initiatives, and the overall policy shift they embody, be sustained in a consistent way over a long period and that they be clearly communicated both to our own population and to our partner countries, including those in the Indo-Pacific region. (Paragraph 32)

12. The Government agrees the Indo-Pacific must form a long term and enduring aspect of the UK's international policy. A free and open Indo-Pacific is critical to our economy, our security and to our interest in an open and stable international order. This is compatible with the security and prosperity of the Euro-Atlantic remaining our core priority as set out in the Integrated Review Refresh. Furthermore, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and subsequent impact on global food and energy prices underlines that the prosperity and security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific are inseparable.

13. The Government disagrees that it has not set out its long-term objectives clearly. The Government has set out its position repeatedly and in public including in the original Integrated Review 2021, the Integrated Review Refresh 2023 and in speeches by the former Secretary of State for Foreign Commonwealth and Development Affairs, James Cleverly MP in Singapore in September 2022 and at Mansion House in April 2023.

14. The Government agrees that the UK's Indo-Pacific approach must use all levers at its disposal (diplomacy, trade, development, people-to-people ties, defence engagement and technology and research ties) to build the range of ambitious and effective partnerships that are key to achieving our objectives. Given the breadth and diversity of the region and multi-dimensional nature of the challenges faced, long-term patient diplomacy is needed. We will continue to work across Government including with the Department for Business and Trade and the Ministry of Defence to support a free and open Indo-Pacific.

15. The Government agrees with the Committee on the nomenclature used to describe the UK's focus on the Indo-Pacific in the Integrated Review 2021. As the Integrated Review Refresh 2023 makes clear, the 'tilt' has been achieved and the Indo-Pacific now forms

a permanent pillar of the UK's international policy. The former Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, James Cleverly MP made his position clear that it would be an error to view the 'tilt' as a zero-sum game. The FCDO's global network of 161 sovereign posts, our people and partnership with other HMG departments gives the UK a unique ability to engage in multiple regions at the same time. This is critical for a period of heightened risk and volatility that is likely to last beyond the 2030s.

16. The Government also agrees clear and tailored communication with Indo-Pacific partners in private and in public is an important part of building the long-term partnerships we require and communication domestically of why the region matters to the British public is key. The Government is increasing its strategic communications resource in the region to ensure sustained communication of its goals and intentions. The speeches that the former Foreign Secretary and other Ministers have given are for domestic and international audiences, to set out why the region matters and what we are doing to deliver our objectives.

3: While we support a stronger foreign policy focus on the Indo-Pacific region, it should not be achieved at the expense of regions where we have historic and pressing commitments, in particular the Middle East. (Paragraph 25)

17. The Government agrees with the Committee. The Integrated Review Refresh was clear that the Middle East is a geographic priority as part of the Euro-Atlantic wider neighbourhood and integral to the UK's defence, security, economic, energy and international development interests. The Government supports Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas in accordance with international humanitarian law and unequivocally condemns Hamas and its appalling acts of terrorism, including the taking of hostages. We are clear that the terrorist actions of Hamas against Israel have no justification. We are working to end the fighting in Gaza – including through regular, high-level engagement with the Israeli government - to stop the further loss of civilian lives and create the conditions for a permanent peace. We are also working with our global partners, including key partners in the region, to prevent the conflict spreading and causing wider instability.

5: We support the continued prioritisation of the UK's relationship with Indo-Pacific countries and all efforts to expand trade and investment links with one of the fastest growing regions of the world, which will benefit the economies of the UK and our partners globally. (Paragraph 28)

18. The Government agrees and welcomes the Committee's support for its increased economic engagement with the Indo-Pacific region. The Indo-Pacific is the engine of global growth; expected to account for 54% of global GDP growth between 2021 and 2050. The UK aims to capitalise on its growth and dynamism to support UK prosperity.

19. The UK signed its Accession Protocol to CPTPP on 16 July 2023. Entry into force will take place once both the UK and CPTPP Parties have finished their ratification processes. Our ambition is to complete the required domestic procedures as soon as possible with the aim of entry into force in the second half of this year, following the usual Parliamentary scrutiny and passage of any required legislation. Joining CPTPP will give UK businesses enhanced access to the Malaysian market for the first time. CPTPP also puts the UK at the heart of a dynamic group of free trading countries, as the world economy increasingly centres on the Indo-Pacific region.

20. We have an ambitious trade negotiations programme in the region and have already taken steps to make this vision a reality:
21. Continuing negotiations on the UK-India FTA (a deal which would boost our current trading relationship, already worth £38 billion in 2023);
22. Working to implement new and ambitious FTAs with Australia and New Zealand (which are expected to increase bilateral trade by 53% and 59% respectively in the long run);
23. Launching negotiations to upgrade the UK-Korea FTA as announced during the recent State Visit (which would enhance the UK's existing trade relationship with South Korea, worth £18.3 billion in 2022);
24. Signing a ground-breaking Digital Economy Agreement with Singapore.
25. Using the implementation committees for the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to open new opportunities for UK companies, for example, on supporting Japan's road to net zero and the digitisation of the economy.
26. The Indo-Pacific accounts for the third largest source of investment for the UK after Europe and North America. We are working to increase high value inward investment from the region into UK priority areas such as Net Zero and Levelling Up to deliver economic growth and prosperity.
27. We are supporting UK business by tackling priority market access barriers in the region and working with key Indo-Pacific partners to address shared challenges in critical supply chains, discourage trade restrictive measures and champion free and fair trade, supporting key Integrated Review commitments.

RESOURCES

9: [In the Refresh the Government states that it will double funding to build China capabilities across government to better understand China and allow the UK to engage confidently where it is in our interests to do so.] This is a welcome development, but no detail has been provided. (Paragraph 40)

28. 13: The Government should enumerate extra expenditure more comprehensively and transparently than it has done in the Refresh. We welcome the doubling of funding to build China capabilities; this should be itemised in broad terms so that it is clear what kind of resources will be added. The Government should spell out what will be needed to strengthen diplomatic contact and people-to-people relationships with China, as promised in the Refresh, and how much extra this will cost. (Paragraph 45)

29. The Government agrees with the Committee. This Government has committed to investing in the skills and knowledge of civil servants, giving them the tools to better understand China in order to respond to the systemic challenge that China poses to the UK's security, prosperity and values, but also to engage confidently where it is in our interests to do so.

30. The China Capability Programme delivers an expanded offer of learning and development events in the UK and abroad, language training and greater access to tools

which are available across the Civil Service. As set out in the Integrated Review Refresh, the funding for China Capabilities will double; this will further enable HMG to ensure that civil servants have the right blend of skills, resources and structures to meet the geopolitical challenge of China's increasing influence on the world.

31. The programme, which runs in addition to existing work on our China capabilities such as full-time language training for all staff going overseas to 'speaker slot' posts across our China Network, includes:

Curriculum

32. Training covering beginner to practitioner level, with strands for senior civil servants and future leaders, on a range of priority knowledge and policy topics related to China. Additional expert level training available on Chinese economics, negotiation skills and international relations.

Events

33. International and UK-based events to improve civil servants' understanding of China's influence and impact as well as of HMG's work on and policy towards China.

Language

34. A cross-government Mandarin language offer, expected to train hundreds of civil servants this year, including enhanced immersion programmes to help those with the highest levels of Mandarin maintain their language capabilities for future roles within HMG.

11: The continuing high priority of the Indo-Pacific in the 2023 Refresh should be matched by a commensurately expanded resource allocation to ensure delivery. While welcoming the doubling of spending on China-facing capability and the £20 million more for the BBC World Service, there needs to be more transparency on the extent and distribution of additional funding for the UK's capability for the Indo-Pacific as a whole. (Paragraph 43)

12: *The Government should now explain how its prioritisation of the Indo-Pacific region will be translated into long-term resource allocation, for example in a reallocation of FCDO budget towards the Indo-Pacific and an increase in the number of diplomatic posts in the region, and it should indicate in which countries these will be located.* (Paragraph 44)

35. The Government partially agrees with the Committee. Given the importance of building enduring partnerships based on patient diplomacy, diplomatic posts are essential to understanding the local context and inform UK decision-making in the long-term. The Government has already increased its diplomatic presence in the region. We have doubled the number of British High Commissions across the Pacific Island Countries over the past four years. The UK now has six High Commissions in the Pacific including: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Samoa and Vanuatu.

36. In 2019, the UK also opened the UK Mission to ASEAN to implement strengthened UK-ASEAN engagement and the UK High Commission to the Maldives. In addition, we have increased resourcing in a number of key regional Missions including Canberra,

Jakarta, and Singapore. We have also established a Pacific Development Unit (PDU), led from the High Commission in Canberra. Working with new development expertise based in Fiji and New Zealand, the PDU is charged with driving forward development partnerships across the Pacific region.

37. Our resource commitment to the region is not just in our sovereign posts. The Indo-Pacific is a whole of government effort requiring resource alignment across departments. For instance on defence, since 2021, the Government has increased our persistent presence in the region, deploying two Offshore Patrol Vessels to the Indo-Pacific on a permanent basis, deployed the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth and her Carrier Strike Group in 2021, the Littoral Response Group will deploy into the region in 2024 and the UK will deploy another Carrier Strike Group to the region in 2025. In addition, we have expanded our network of Defence Attachés and regional defence staff in the Indo-Pacific – including establishing resident Defence Attachés in Manila in the Philippines and Suba in Fiji - to deepen our understanding and influence in over 20 countries. We have also expanded our regional teams, increasing the size and scope of British Defence Staff South-East Asia in Singapore and establishing the new British Defence Staff Oceania in Australia.

38. On science and technology, the Indo-Pacific region is essential to maintaining the UK's scientific base, supporting the competitive advantage of our innovative businesses whilst addressing shared opportunities and threats. That is why the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology have expanded the UK's Science and Innovation Network in region from 30 posts in 2021/22 to 40 in 2023/24, strengthening the UK's ability to build partnerships across this dynamic region.

39. DBT is the second largest department on the FCDO's overseas platform overall (10%) after the FCDO and has increased spending on the region since 2021, largely due to the full roll out of the Digital Trade Network.

40. The FCDO publishes data on expenditure per Director General area and the relative size of overseas missions in its Annual Report.

14: *The Government should also ensure the commensurate uplift of CSSF funding for Indo-Pacific region is put in place.* (Paragraph 46)

41. The Government partially agrees to the Committee's recommendation that CSSF funding should increase to reflect the Government's long-term commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. CSSF prioritises spending on those geographies and thematic issues linked to conflict, stability and security overseas that pose the greatest direct threat to the UK and where some of the world's most vulnerable populations live. This includes the Indo-Pacific region. As the Committee will recognise, the challenging fiscal situation we are in means we are faced with tough choices. Funding is adjusted annually to reflect resources available and evolving priorities.

15: *We recommend that the FCDO publish and implement a long-term, sustainable language strategy for Indo-Pacific languages, including targets for language learning, encouraging the establishment and/or expansion of language teaching in UK by developing a plan to expand existing university departments or add new departments,*

as appropriate, supported with additional Government funding, and adjusting diplomat posting and rotation policy to ensure optimal use of foreign languages learned.

(Paragraph 47)

42. The Government partially agrees with the recommendation. The FCDO already operates a flexible language learning system for speaker slots in the Indo-Pacific region which is Directorate- and Post-guided. Our target is for 80% of speaker slots to be filled by a speaker with a valid C1 / C2 language exam pass. Post rotation length is based on a set of criteria reflecting circumstances at post. Focusing only on the language requirement would impact FCDO ability to fill speaker slots. Through operational language teaching for those at posts not in speaker slots and developmental language training in the FCDO's priority languages, including Mandarin and Japanese, for UK-based staff, the FCDO develops its language capability.

43. Education is a devolved matter and the Devolved Governments are responsible for their own arrangements and funding for language teaching in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

44. In England, the Government took action in 2010 to increase the number of pupils entered for language qualifications by introducing the English Baccalaureate. In 2014, a new Modern Foreign Languages curriculum required all state-funded primary schools to teach a foreign language to pupils at key stage 2. Language study is compulsory at key stage 3 and schools have the freedom to choose which languages they teach to best meet the needs of their pupils. Mandarin can be taught by a school on both accounts. There remain relatively few pupils currently studying Mandarin in state-funded schools compared to other Modern Foreign Languages. The Mandarin Excellence Programme aims to address this issue and uptake is increasing.

45. The Mandarin Excellence Programme commenced in September 2016 with 14 secondary schools. It was re-procured in 2021 for £16.4 million and has grown to over 8,600 pupils in 81 schools across the country in 2023. Pupils on the programme commit to eight hours language study a week over the course of the programme, in order to achieve a high level of fluency. The programme has already achieved its target to have 5,000 pupils on the path to fluency by 2020 and is now on target to reach 9,000 pupils with a high level of fluency this year.

46. In 2023, the Department for Education in England also ran a public consultation seeking to make changes to subject content requirements for Chinese and Japanese AS and A levels. These changes sought to make both qualifications more accessible for pupils, with the view to encourage more young people to study these languages to key stage 5 and beyond. The AS and A level subject content was updated and published in July 2023 to reflect these changes and first teaching of the new subject content will commence from September this year.

47. The Language Assistants programme delivers on a series of bilateral agreements between the British Council (on behalf of the Department for Education and the Devolved Governments) and Education Ministries in 15 destinations worldwide. This includes the delivery of Language Assistant placements in Hong Kong for recent UK graduates, who assist with teaching English. It also supports the placement of Chinese Language Assistants

in UK education providers, to support with teaching of Mandarin. In the academic year 23/24 there will be 38 Chinese Language Assistants in the UK, working across 49 primary and secondary schools to support with the teaching of Mandarin.

10: [The Refresh is more specific in announcing that £20 million will be provided to enable the BBC World Service to protect all 42 World Service language services, support English language broadcasting and counter disinformation.] This is also a welcome development, though World Service language coverage still needs to be restored or initiated for several Indo-Pacific countries, for example, broadcasts in Malay (the language of Malaysia, a Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) ally) and Hokkien (spoken in Singapore, Taiwan and Fujian province of China) have been abandoned, and there have never been World Service broadcasts in two national languages of ASEAN countries which we wish to influence, Khmer (the language of Cambodia) and Lao—Cambodia and Laos are the two countries in Southeast Asia closest to China. (Paragraph 41)

16: *While welcoming the extra £20 million to be spent on the BBC World Service, including for protecting the 42 foreign languages in which it broadcasts, we recommend that World Service coverage should be restored in languages which have been discontinued (Malay and Hokkien) and initiated in important Indo-Pacific languages in which the World Service has not yet broadcast (Khmer and Lao).* (Paragraph 48)

48. The Government partially agrees with the Committee. The Government recognises the importance of the World Service's role, reaching audiences across the globe and providing impartial, quality content. The BBC delivers the World Service under its Charter commitment to reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the World and it remains operationally and editorially independent from the Government. Decisions about how language services are delivered are for the BBC to take and any opening of new services would require the agreement of both the BBC and the Foreign Secretary, who has a formal role in approving the opening or closure of services.

49. We recognise the potential benefits of greater World Service reach in the Indo-Pacific region and the benefits that its broadcasting can achieve through countering disinformation and building a positive perception of the UK among audiences abroad. The scope and funding for the World Service is fixed for the remainder of the current funding period. The FCDO provides £94.4 million per annum to support 12 language services and the Government has provided an exceptional uplift of £20 million to the BBC World Service over the next two years. This will safeguard the current scope of the BBC's 42 language services, preventing closures of any language service during a time of particular fiscal pressure. The World Service already reaches a substantial audience in the Indo-Pacific region. It delivers content in Bangla, Burmese, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Nepali, Sinhala, Tamil, Urdu and Vietnamese, which are services funded by the Licence Fee. The FCDO also provides funding for additional services in Thai, Gujarati, Punjabi, Marathi, Telugu and Korean. Together, these services reach a weekly audience of 97.6 million. Any decisions around the potential expansion of the World Service's current scope is a matter for the BBC and would take place in the next funding period and be agreed jointly with the Government.

STRATEGY FOR THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

50. 17: The Government should urgently publish an unclassified version of its China Strategy to ensure cross-Government coherence and also publish sector-specific guidance to support, in particular, industries of critical national importance, national security, or data-intensive industries. It must also ensure all relevant Ministers have been briefed on the higher classification version. (Paragraph 59)

51. The Government disagrees with the Committee's recommendation. HMG clearly set out its approach to China in the Integrated Review Refresh: protecting our national security, aligning with our allies and partners and engaging with China where it is in UK interests to do so. The former Foreign Secretary's Mansion House Speech in April built on this, making clear that we will always put British national interests and British national security first in our engagement with China. As such, the Government does not intend to publish an additional China Strategy and we have not committed to do so. We will continue to maintain as much transparency as possible and keep Parliament informed of our approach towards China, while recognising it is not in UK interests to make every element of the strategy public.

52. HMG has published Overseas Business Risk Guidance in relation to China to help cutting-edge UK firms negotiate the ethical, legal and commercial questions they may encounter in China or when working with Chinese businesses and is keeping such guidance under review. We are also working closely to ensure cross-Government coherence, at all levels of government. Simultaneously, we are briefing relevant Ministers. This is necessary to protect national security and the safety of all involved.

53. 18: [We believe that the activities outlined in the report, such as the attack on demonstrators outside the Chinese consulate in Manchester are not isolated incidents, but rather a sustained attempt by the PRC to intimidate expats and dissidents from China and Hong Kong living abroad into refraining from holding or expressing certain views or beliefs. The CCP is working to silence anyone willing to voice criticism against its most egregious acts.] In addition to reactively addressing such incidents as they occur, the UK must work with allies to proactively communicate to the PRC that such a policy is unacceptable. The Government should work to raise this issue at international fora, and in conversations when engaging directly with the Chinese Government. (Paragraph 64)

54. The Government agrees with the Committee that any attempt by any foreign power to intimidate, harass or harm individuals or communities in the UK will not be tolerated. Any such incidences would constitute an insidious threat to our democracy and fundamental human rights.

55. We will continue to engage with key international partners to ensure we have a collective understanding of the issue, its scale and its impact on our democracies, individuals and communities. It is only right that our approach is actor agnostic – no foreign power should seek to repress individuals resident in the UK.

56. The Government has made clear our position at international fora. The Prime Minister stressed that any such interference is unacceptable when he met Premier Li Qiang at the G20 New Delhi Summit on 10 September 2023. At the Hiroshima Summit, the UK and other G7 countries called on China not to conduct interference activities aimed at undermining the security and safety of our communities, the integrity of our

democratic institutions and our economic prosperity. We will continue to challenge the Chinese Government about Chinese interference in our democratic institutions through our bilateral engagement - as the former Foreign Secretary did during his visit to Beijing on 30 August last year, and as the Foreign Secretary has done with his counterpart Wang Yi.

57. As set out in the Integrated Review, the UK's policy towards China is anchored in our core national interests and our higher interest in an open and stable international order, based on the UN Charter and international law. We should engage constructively, where it is consistent with these interests, while taking swift and robust action to protect wherever the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) poses a threat to those interests. This is the template for mature diplomacy between two permanent five (P5) states and is aligned with the approaches adopted by our closest allies and partners, including those in Europe, the US, Australia, Canada and Japan.

19: *The Government must recognise repeated attacks on Hong Kong dissidents as part of wider PRC policy of repression, and proactively challenge this behaviour and communicate the unacceptability of such a policy directly with representatives of the PRC.* (Paragraph 65)

58. The Government agrees and has made clear publicly that any attempts by China and Hong Kong to intimidate and silence individuals in the UK and overseas are unacceptable. The UK will always defend the universal right to freedom of expression and stand up for those who are targeted.

59. We strongly object to the National Security Law (NSL) that China imposed on Hong Kong, including its extraterritorial reach, in breach of the legally binding Sino-British Joint Declaration. The authorities have used the law to stifle opposition voices and criminalise dissent in Hong Kong, deliberately targeting prominent pro-democracy figures, journalists and politicians in an effort to silence and discredit them. We have and will continue to call on Beijing to remove the NSL and for the Hong Kong authorities to end their targeting of those who stand up for rights, freedoms and democratic values.

60. Through engagement with the PRC and Hong Kong SAR Government, the UK continues to raise and challenge negative behaviours and activities that target diaspora communities in the UK, including their decision to no longer recognise the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) passport and their attempts to intimidate and silence individuals using arrest warrants under the NSL.

61. The UK will continue to stand up for the rights of the people of Hong Kong, as we have demonstrated by introducing the bespoke immigration route for BN(O) status holders and their eligible family members. As of June 2023, 182,600 applications have been made and 176,407 visas granted. The FCDO worked with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to launch the Welcome Programme in 2021 for Hong Kongers moving to the UK to support their integration into UK communities. The FCDO continues to work with the Home Office and DLUHC to ensure the efficacy of the route and the continued delivery of the Welcome Programme.

20: *We welcome the Government's China policy statement in general terms in the Refresh. However, this policy now needs to be fleshed out so that practitioners such as academics and businesspeople can be fully aware of the limits within which they can operate with*

and in China. The FCDO should explain the rationale and method by which it intends to separate issues over which there is contention with China from those on which it seeks close cooperation with China, especially in areas such as trade and educational links, where the line of demarcation is not always clear. (Paragraph 69)

62. The Government partially agrees with the Committee's recommendation. As the Committee has identified, the Integrated Review Refresh sets out that the UK will further strengthen our national security protections in those areas where the actions of the CCP pose a threat to our people, prosperity and security. Throughout and where tensions arise with other objectives, we will always put national security first.

63. To guide practitioners in business and academia, we published guidance to help UK firms negotiate the ethical, legal and commercial questions they may encounter in China or when working with Chinese businesses, supporting safe and appropriate UK-China collaboration in digital and tech. The guidance provides firms with clear information and specialist support which reflect the UK's values and take account of national security concerns.

64. Our world-leading higher education system is international at its core and it is right that the sector collaborate with international partners, but to be open we must also be secure. Therefore, universities must be security minded in their approach and safeguard our core values. Whilst we encourage interconnectedness and collaboration, we will not allow this to be exploited by accepting collaborations which compromise our national security and the Government continues to support the sector to identify and mitigate the risks of interference.

65. Central to our engagement with the sector is the provision of the Research Collaboration Advice Team (RCAT) within the Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology, which gives advice to UK research institutions on managing national security risks in international collaborations. The RCAT supports academics and university leaders to understand security risks and to put in place appropriate and proportionate safeguards to support their collaborative activity. Since the launch of its advisory service in March 2022, the RCAT has engaged over 130 research institutions and addressed over 350 specific queries, including many complex issues which have resulted in targeted mitigations of national security concerns. We continue to talk to universities to ensure advice and measures on tackling security risks when engaging internationally remain relevant and proportionate. This helps to promote safe, sustainable and legally compliant international collaboration.

66. The Government also provides sustained national security advice through the National Protective Security Authority's and National Cyber Security Centre's Trusted Research and Secure Innovation campaigns, which help UK industry, universities and research institutions to make informed decisions about international collaboration and how best to manage associated risks.

67. The Integrated Review Refresh contains a commitment to review the effectiveness of the measures that have been put into place, to understand if the Government could be doing more to counter what is an evolving and increasingly complex threat. The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, which is responsible for research security policy, is leading this review.

68. With regard to international students, the UK is a world-leading destination for students from overseas, including from China, where they add to the academic richness of UK universities. They significantly contribute both economically and culturally to the higher education sector, for both international and domestic students with cultural exchange and building lifelong relationships, networks and political and diplomatic bridges. Universities are well-aware of the possible risks associated with dependence on a single source of funding, whether that is from a single organisation or from a single nation. The Government has published an International Education Strategy, making clear that universities must ensure they have appropriate processes in place to manage risks surrounding internationalisation. The diversification and sustainable recruitment of international students remains a key priority for the Government.

21: *In the absence of a publicly available, and practical, strategy for business, academia, civil society and others to adhere to, it is vital that the Government updates existing legislation and guidance in an urgent and clear manner so that organisations can understand the parameters within which they should be operating. The Procurement Bill was a good example of important legislation to give businesses a clear steer on what the Government perceives as acceptable and unacceptable procurement practices, but this needs to be undertaken in an urgent and structured manner.* (Paragraph 70)

69. The Government partially agrees with the Committee. The Integrated Review Refresh sets out the UK's approach to China. In line with this, the Government will continue to update existing legislation and guidance, where relevant, to enable organisations to make informed decisions. For instance, we have introduced the National Security and Investment Act 2021 (NSI Act) and are preparing to operationalise the Foreign Influence Registration Scheme, one of the new tools of the National Security Act 2023. The NSI Act gives the Government powers to scrutinise and intervene in business transactions, such as takeovers, to protect national security, while providing businesses and investors with the certainty and transparency they need to do business in the UK. The Foreign Influence Registration Scheme is designed to strengthen the integrity of our politics, institutions and protect the UK from state threats. Targeted and user friendly guidance will be made available ahead of the scheme going live this year. It will include practical examples to guide businesses, organisations and individuals who will need to engage with the scheme.

22: *The Government should have had a policy of zero tolerance of transnational repression. It is unacceptable that this has not been the position up to now. It should now announce a clear policy of zero tolerance of transnational repression and be prepared to expel any foreign diplomats who engage in intimidation of, or physical attacks on, British Citizens or those who seek refuge on UK shores. If the Government is unwilling to defend its own people at home, and those seeking safety, it will lose all credibility at claims or attempts to deter autocracies and aggression abroad. The Government should be prepared to assert that defence is not an escalation.* (Paragraph 71)

70. The Government disagrees with the Committee. The Government's clear position is that all foreign diplomats and consular staff in the UK are obligated to comply with UK law regardless of their privileges and immunities.

71. Immediately following the incident at the Chinese Consulate General in Manchester during October 2022, the FCDO asked the Chinese Government to waive the immunity of the Consulate staff involved to enable the interviews to take place and gave the Chinese

Government one week to comply, in line with the relevant provisions of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR) and bilateral convention. We were clear that we were prepared to take action. As a result, China decided to withdraw the individuals concerned rather than waive their immunity. Our firm diplomacy and our actions demonstrated the seriousness with which we took this incident.

72. The Defending Democracy Taskforce, led by the UK Security Minister, is conducting a review into the UK's approach to transnational repression (TNR). The Taskforce is a joint Home Office and Cabinet Office function. As part of the TNR Review, the Taskforce is engaging across departments, policing and the UK intelligence community. This review is focused on two areas: building our understanding and evidence base of TNR in the UK; and considering additional mitigations and whether any vulnerabilities need to be addressed.

23: We must recognise that all pillars of society are under attack from autocracies and that our resulting defence against them must be a defence of all of our society. (Paragraph 73)

73. The Government agrees with the Committee that there is a wider need to build resilience across all of our society.

74. As the Integrated Review Refresh sets out, we must strengthen the UK's domestic resilience and international partnerships. That includes a new focus on tackling state threats to the UK's democracy, economy and society as well as protecting our science and technological base.

75. There is a growing prospect that the international security environment will further deteriorate in the coming years. Therefore, we must also make it harder for state and non-state actors to target our people, society, economy and institutions.

76. It is right that the Government is establishing a new process for identifying and assessing chronic risks, those enduring challenges that gradually erode elements of our economy, society, way of life and/or national security, such as disinformation.

24: *The Government should intensify its efforts to discourage the use of superficially harmless technologies (e.g. Hikvision surveillance cameras) which are capable of being used for remote data harvesting. The Government should also launch a national discussion around data release, and data exfiltration, so that the public are better equipped to make responsible decisions about their own data.* (Paragraph 86)

77. The Government partially agrees with the Committee. The Government keeps the security of our personnel, information, assets and estate under constant review. On 24 November 2022, the Government committed to remove certain surveillance technology from sensitive parts of the HMG estate. This policy is focused on equipment produced by companies subject to the National Intelligence Law of the People's Republic of China.

78. We have published guidance which provides UK businesses with clear information and specialist support to help negotiate the ethical, legal and commercial questions they may encounter in China or when working with Chinese businesses.

79. In addition, we have introduced Overseas Business Risk guidance in relation to China that makes clear to UK businesses the need to consider the risks of exposure to entities that may be providing or developing surveillance technologies.

80. We know that data can be exploited by those seeking to counter UK interests and we are taking action to secure our data. We need to strike the right balance between the openness and increasing availability of data, whilst protecting UK national security. We are actively monitoring threats to UK data and will not hesitate to take further action if necessary to protect our national security.

25: *The Government recognises the threat that the Chinese Communist Party could use economic coercion to influence UK decision making by targeting strategically critical sectors. The Government has not taken adequate action to tackle this threat. It must work to identify which technologies, infrastructure and components the UK is most dependent on China for, and plan to mitigate dependencies. Priority should be afforded to areas where such technologies are embedded in Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) and the Internet of Things. The Government should create a strategic dependency risk assessment of technologies, infrastructure and components embedded in Critical National Infrastructure.* (Paragraph 87)

81. The Government partially agrees with the Committee. The Integrated Review Refresh is clear that the global economic and trade order are showing signs of fragmenting and there has been an increase in the use of economic coercion. The UK has taken clear steps alongside partners to increase resilience, including launching the G7 Co-ordination Platform on Economic Coercion to allow for collective and rapid response to such events. The UK published its Critical Imports and Supply Chains Strategy on 17 January. It will help UK businesses build secure and reliable supply chains, alongside the recently published Semiconductor Strategy.

82. The UK has also taken robust action to build our domestic resilience and we are committed to safeguarding our national security. This includes introducing the National Security and Investment Act, giving the Government new powers to intervene in acquisitions where we have national security concerns. Alongside this, we are strengthening visa screening of academics and researchers in sensitive areas of research.

83. The Government has also strengthened protections through the Telecoms Security Act, addressing security risks of using specific Huawei technology in our future 5G networks. The Government issued a designation notice to Huawei and a designated vendor direction to 35 public telecoms providers in October 2022, placing specific restrictions on their use of Huawei goods and services.

26: *Cross-government and external agency coordination in mitigating the risk of technological dependence on China is uneven and disjointed. The Government should create a central CNI list to improve coordination and clarify areas of priority. With the technology sector now dominated by a few key players, we are now over-reliant on Chinese technology. This is the direct result of deliberate, carefully directed and well-coordinated CCP policy to create dependence. We cannot overcome this dependence without an equally well-coordinated resilience strategy.* (Paragraph 88)

84. The Government partially agrees with the Committee. The UK has taken clear steps to strengthen protections and safeguard UK Critical National Infrastructure. In 2021, the

Government introduced the National Security and Investment Act, providing powers to intervene in acquisitions where national security risks arise. The Government welcomes trade and investment where it is consistent with our values, but we will always put national security first.

85. The Act identifies 17 sensitive areas of the economy whereby businesses are required to tell the Government about acquisitions of certain entities. These include sectors which relate to critical national infrastructure, such as Civil Nuclear, Communications, Cryptographic Authentication, Satellite and Space Technology and Synthetic Biology. As a clear example, we have intervened in acquisitions in the energy sector, safeguarding the resilience of UK energy infrastructure and the security of services provided to the National Grid.

ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

27: [Neither the Integrated Review (IR) nor the Refresh mentions the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world's largest trade bloc, which, though China-dominated, includes the UK's allies in the Indo-Pacific, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. (The UK is a founding member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), another Chinese initiative). The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF, launched by the US in 2022) was not mentioned in the IR because it was formed after publication; however, it is also not mentioned in the Refresh.] These are major omissions. The Government should explain its stance towards these bodies, even if it is, as the Foreign Secretary has indicated, too early to decide on applying to join them. (Paragraph 91)

28: *The Government should publish, by December 2023, an assessment of progress made to date in the development of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), for example to what extent it might serve UK interests and objectives in the Indo-Pacific and how it interacts with other multilateral initiatives such as the CPTPP and the G7's Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment. At the same time, the Government should publish an assessment of the role of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in the Indo-Pacific with a view to considering seeking to join it, including an evaluation of its effect on UK interests in the region, an independent estimate of its potential to increase trade and incomes in the Indo-Pacific, and an assessment of its advantages and disadvantages, particularly vis-à-vis the CPTPP. It is our view that to compete with the PRC's efforts to create mirror or standalone economic organisations, the UK can—but only when it is strictly necessary—play a role through participation, to prevent these organisations overly creating economic reliance on the PRC and its approach to international standards.* (Paragraph 92)

Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)

86. In May 2022, the US launched the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity in Tokyo. In addition to the US, IPEF includes thirteen Indo-Pacific nations (Australia, Brunei, Fiji, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and is composed of four separate pillars (fair and resilient trade; supply chain resilience; clean energy, decarbonisation and infrastructure; and tax and anti-corruption).

87. Responses from IPEF members have indicated that they welcome the US's engagement with the region, but the lack of a market access offer within IPEF could be a barrier.

88. The Government does not agree that we should publish an assessment of IPEF while negotiations are ongoing. At this stage of negotiations, we are unable to assess the value of IPEF and the final substance of the Framework remains to be confirmed.

89. We welcome IPEF as a demonstration of US re-engagement in trade and economic security in the Indo-Pacific, following their exit from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (predecessor to CPTPP). We agree on the importance of the issues prioritised through this new initiative, notably supply chains and digital economy rules and we are already working with partners in the region and the US on such matters.

90. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

91. RCEP is a plurilateral agreement between 15 Asia-Pacific countries signed on 15 November 2020. RCEP includes Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

92. As a liberal and open economy and a supporter of free and rules-based trade, the UK takes a close interest in RCEP. While we do not currently envisage the UK seeking to join RCEP, we are committed to enhancing trade with our partners in the region.

93. The Government does not agree that it should publish an assessment of RCEP. We are currently focusing on ratifying our accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and completing our existing trade negotiation commitments across the region. CPTPP is a much deeper agreement than RCEP and we believe will set standards globally on a wide number of areas.

29: The Government should explore and exploit opportunities for further developing of people-to-people and defence/security links with Commonwealth countries in the Indo-Pacific region, based on historical ties and shared values. (Paragraph 93)

94. The Government agrees with the Committee that the Commonwealth forms an important part of our diverse approach to engaging the region through bilateral, minilateral and multilateral groupings. The fact the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) will be held in Samoa this year offers further opportunities to strengthen our ties.

30: [While stressing the importance of AUKUS, the Refresh makes no mention of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad) established in 2007 and renewed since 2017 between Australia, India, Japan and the United States. We heard differing opinions from witnesses on whether the UK should apply to join the Quad, with some strongly supporting UK membership, others suggesting that it is too early to consider this now and one group against the proposal altogether. While understanding the reservations,] we see advantage in working with the Quad to develop a coordinated strategy covering the whole Indo-Pacific maritime area, and applying to join the Quad at such time as the existing members feel is appropriate. (Paragraph 95)

31: Given the strength of our bilateral defence relationships with Quad members and the correlation between the UK's and Quad's objectives, the UK should seek to join the Quad. (Paragraph 96)

95. The Government partially agrees with the Committee's recommendations relating to the Indo-Pacific Quad. The Indo-Pacific Quad members are amongst the UK's closest partners in the region and the Government welcomes the collaborative efforts of Australia, India, Japan and the US on critical issues such as climate change, health security and maritime security and the importance of this grouping for our shared objective of a free and open Indo-Pacific. We will continue to work with Quad members bilaterally and multilaterally on these issues. Membership of the Quad is not necessary for the UK to deliver this practical cooperation.

32: A Free and Open Indo-Pacific is the right basis for cooperation between widely differing countries in the region on common policy areas, as it establishes basic principles on which like-minded countries can agree and then move on to fashion shared approaches to putting them into practice. Again, if we wish to prevent the undermining of international standards and the values of the rules-based system, our joining some Indo-Pacific specific organisations is crucial, to support our allies and uphold those values. The PRC should not perceive, or falsely portray, increased multilateral partnership and engagement as being hostile, or directed at the PRC. Any effort to do so should be exposed for the false narrative that it is. (Paragraph 97)

96. The Government agrees that a free and open Indo-Pacific is a positive approach from which to engage the region. It is important that a regional balance of power ensures no single power dominates and where a rich tapestry of institutions and partnerships shape a stable but adaptable regional order in which: states can make choices free from coercion, disinformation and interference; territorial integrity is respected and disputes resolved in line with international law. The Government has already increased engagement with regional institutions like ASEAN, CPTPP, the Indian Ocean Rim Association and the Pacific Islands Forum. The Government will seek to join other regional forums where it is in the UK's interest to do so such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM+) and communicate its objectives in relation to these forums clearly.

33: *The Government should propose to Australia and the United States that Japan and South Korea be invited to join an AUKUS technological defence cooperation agreement focused on Strand B activities only.* (Paragraph 101)

58: *The Government should support a formal agreement on closer engagement of AUKUS Strand B with Japan in the short term with a potential view to eventual Japanese membership of AUKUS, which would greatly strengthen AUKUS' role in the Indo-Pacific.* (Paragraph 199)

97. The Government partially agrees with these recommendations. AUKUS is one of the most strategically important capability collaborations in decades, which will strengthen Indo-Pacific and global security. We recognise interest from partners in collaborating on AUKUS advanced capability work streams (Pillar II of the partnership, referenced as 'Strand B' in the Committee's report). In the AUKUS Leaders' Statement of April 2022, trilateral partners committed to engaging with allies and close partners as Pillar II lines

of effort mature. The success of Pillar II relies on establishing the successful trilateral development of advanced technologies and industrial eco-system to rapidly deliver capability. The three partner nations are focussed on delivering this dual track effort first and foremost.

98. Both Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) are important defence partners for the UK. As set out in the UK-Japan Hiroshima Accord in May 2023 and the UK-ROK Downing Street Accord signed in November 2023, we are committed to strengthening our shared security capabilities to help support global peace and stability. In Japan's case, this includes the Global Combat Air Programme and the recent conclusion of a Reciprocal Access Agreement, which will enhance joint exercising and planning. The UK-ROK Accord builds on the existing 2022 Bilateral Framework's focus on strengthening service-to-service relationships, improving interoperability and having more formal training and joint exercise programmes. The Accord also includes a Foreign and Defence Ministers 2+2 and commitment to consult on regional and global security issues. A new defence democracy dialogue and UK participation in the Korea-hosted third Summit for Democracy will also strengthen joint efforts to counter state threats.

34: In the face of challenges such as the more aggressive role of China in the South China Sea, the Five-Power Defence Arrangements, with their solid history of military cooperation, could be a firm basis for a wider regional alliance in Southeast Asia. (Paragraph 102)

99. The Government partially agrees. The FPDA is one of our longest military partnerships, celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in 2021 and is a tangible demonstration of the UK's continuing commitment to the security of South-East Asia. The UK is committed to the continuance of FPDA, under its existing remit, whilst strengthening its relevance and providing reassurance to its members, near neighbours and the wider region. We are delivering on our commitment of making "a bigger and more consistent contribution to FPDA," delivered through regular participation in the full range of FPDA Exercises across all domains, support to its evolution with subject matter expertise, including in cyber and an increase to the UK contingent at HQ Integrated Area Defence in Malaysia to support safe exercising. We welcome efforts to enhance the relevance of the Arrangements in the future regional security environment and are working with members to ensure FPDA continues to evolve to address contemporary challenges.

100. Beyond FPDA, we are increasing our defence engagement with regional partners including the UK application to join the ASEAN Defence Ministerial Meeting-Plus (ADMM+) forum allowing us to engage partners in a flexible manner.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RULES-BASED INTERNATIONAL ORDER

35: *The Government should explain whether it is adopting a two-track approach: negotiating trade agreements separately from discussions on human rights, or a conditional approach: in which trade deals are explicitly linked to—and limited by—our trading partner's human rights record.* (Paragraph 107)

101. The Government disagrees in that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to either negotiating trade deals or supporting human rights. The UK has a long-standing commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights around the world.

Aspects of trade policy can provide the opportunity to address some issues in a bilateral relationship, for example labour issues. Some of our free trade agreements and our Developing Countries Trade Scheme, include provisions relating to human rights.

102. However, in many contexts, trade negotiations will not be the most effective or targeted tool to advance wider human rights issues. It is our experience that having secure and growing trading relationships can increase UK influence and help us to have open conversations with partners on a range of issues, including human rights.

103. FCDO Ministers and Officials defend individual rights and freedoms, including through regularly raising concerns with governments. We also continue to work with our partners, civil society and human rights defenders to encourage all states to defend democracy and freedoms and to hold those who violate human rights to account. Our Annual Human Rights and Democracy Reports are an important part of this work.

36: It is unacceptable that trade should be prioritised over human rights to the extent that states that regularly violate human rights can continue to do so unsanctioned and our consumers, wittingly or unwittingly, participate indirectly by buying products made in inhumane conditions. (Paragraph 108)

104. The Government strongly disagrees trade is prioritised over human rights. We put open societies and the protection of human rights around the world at the heart of what we do.

105. The promotion and fulfilment of human rights requires us to strengthen existing broad-based alliances, build flexible coalitions and reach out to new partners in support of our aims. Increasing the depth and quality of partnerships enables the UK to achieve positive human rights impacts. For example, establishing secure and growing trading relationships increases UK influence and facilitates open conversations.

106. The Government further strongly disagrees states who regularly violate human rights do so unsanctioned. The UK is active in holding those who violate human rights to account. This includes through membership of the Human Rights Council, robust action to hold Russia to account over its actions in Ukraine and at home, leading the call for the Special Session on the human rights implications of the conflict in Sudan and our Global Human Rights sanctions regime.

107. Furthermore, the UK has taken robust sanctions action against perpetrators of gross human rights violations, along with international partners. For example, the UK, EU, Canada and the US coordinated sanctions against perpetrators of gross human rights violations in Xinjiang in March 2021.

108. We will continue to show global leadership in encouraging all states to uphold international rights obligations and to hold those who violate human rights to account.

37: *The Government has as yet failed to sanction any companies for human rights abuses within their supply chains, demonstrating a lack of resolve towards preventing Uyghur forced labour products from flooding the UK. The Government should rectify this.* (Paragraph 109)

109. The Government strongly disagrees that it has demonstrated a lack of resolve on preventing Uyghur forced labour products from entering the UK.

110. The Government agrees on the importance of tackling the risks of human rights abuses within UK supply chains. We have already taken robust action, including introducing new guidance on the risks of doing business in Xinjiang, enhancing export controls and the announcement of the introduction of financial penalties under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. In March 2021, we sanctioned four Chinese officials and one entity for involvement in serious human rights violations in Xinjiang, alongside international partners. More broadly, the UK continues to work closely with our partners to hold China to account for its egregious human rights violations in Xinjiang, including at the United Nations. The Government will continue to keep our policy response under close review.

38: *The Government must not be silent on human rights abuses, including state hostage-taking, by autocracies like the PRC and should use its status as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to denounce such abuses and coordinate action to end them.*
(Paragraph 110)

111. The Government strongly disagrees that it is silent on human rights abuses. FCDO Ministers and Officials continue to defend individual rights and freedoms and regularly raise concerns with governments, including China. There are occasions where private, effective diplomacy unlocks issues and cases. There are of course other times where through collaboration and collective and public action, we have called out the most serious human rights violations.

112. For example, on China, the UK Government has led international efforts to hold it to account for its human rights violations in Xinjiang. We were the first country to step up to lead a joint statement on China's human rights record in Xinjiang at the UN. Since that first UN statement in 2019, we have worked tirelessly through our global diplomatic network. Our leadership has sustained pressure on China to change its behaviour and through our diplomatic efforts we have increased the number of countries speaking out – on 18 October 2023, the UK led a record joint statement in the UN on the situation in Xinjiang, with 49 other signatories.

113. The UK Government further strongly disagrees that it is silent on 'state hostage-taking.' The Government's position is clear: the UK does not and will never accept our nationals being used as diplomatic leverage. The Government is determined to deter and combat this practice. Any such detention is a matter of the greatest concern and priority.

114. That is why, in February 2021, the UK joined 56 other States (now 72 States plus the European Union) in endorsing the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations. This recognises that foreign nationals can be at risk of arbitrary arrest, detention, or sentencing by governments seeking to compel action from other States. It also recognises that this practice is contrary to international law, undermines international relations and has a negative impact on foreign nationals travelling, working and living abroad.

115. The Government also values the important work of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD) and co-sponsors its mandate, most recently in October 2022.

116. The Government urges any country engaging in such behaviour to release those affected immediately. We will continue to work with international partners to call out States who engage in the abhorrent practice and, where victims are British nationals, work to provide consular assistance to victims and their families, until they are released.

CAPACITY BUILDING

39: *The Government should establish a Diplomatic Academy in the Indo-Pacific region to build capacity in foreign policy formulation and diplomatic representation in partner governments that wish to make use of it. This would be a projection of soft power and the strength of rule of law and governance structures which will reinforce the economies and resilience of partner countries.* (Paragraph 124)

117. The Government partially agrees with the Committee's recommendation. The Government already works with partners in the Indo-Pacific region to strengthen policy formulation and share expertise. Our ASEAN Plan of Action commits us to 1) support the development of competencies, abilities and skills of ASEAN civil servants, including through seminars and capacity building activities and 2) implement measures aimed to build capacity in the ASEAN Secretariat, including in the areas of analysis and monitoring and results-based project management.

118. In October 2023, the UK supported the second edition of the Raisina Forum for Future of Diplomacy in New Delhi in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. The programme fosters the skills necessary to lead in a rapidly changing world by focusing on a range of foreign policy and development issues including health, climate change and energy, development cooperation, gender policy and multilateralism. The inaugural edition of the Raisina Forum for Future of Diplomacy, which the UK supported, took place in New Delhi between 10 and 20 October 2022 and saw the participation of 35 diplomats from 30 countries. Other partner governments include Japan, Australia and the United Arab Emirates.

40: *The Government could also seek to pursue programmes such as those suggested above [in the Capacity building chapter] through unifying organisations such as the Commonwealth grouping, and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.* (Paragraph 125)

119. The Government agrees that the Commonwealth and its accredited organisations have been and will continue to be, useful channels for capacity building, including in the Indo-Pacific region. Programmes that are judged to both contribute to either the Government's Commonwealth or relevant geographic objectives and be suitable for delivery in Commonwealth countries and via Commonwealth institutions or mechanisms will be given full consideration.

120. Government policy is to pursue Commonwealth programmes in areas where the organisation has a distinct comparative advantage, with a focus on: boosting trade and investment; protecting the climate and the environment; and promoting Commonwealth values.

121. Relevant examples of programmes supported by the Government include the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH). This deploys technical advisers to help build institutional capacity, enabling countries to access international climate

finance. The CCFAH has supported national advisers in several Commonwealth members in the Indo-Pacific region, including Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. To date, the CCFAH has helped Commonwealth members mobilise over \$310 million for climate action projects.

122. At CHOGM 2018, Leaders adopted the Commonwealth Blue Charter, an agreement to tackle marine environment problems. Ten Action Groups were established, led by 16 Commonwealth countries, including in the Indo-Pacific region, covering topics ranging from aquaculture to preservation of mangroves and ocean acidification. The Action Groups provide members with the opportunity to share knowledge, information (including scientific information), expertise and good practice.

123. Regarding the Committee's proposal to consider the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) as a delivery partner for programmes benefitting the Indo-Pacific region, the Government agrees and is already doing so. The Government has worked with CPA-UK on building capacity in Parliaments in Commonwealth countries in the Indo-Pacific region. During the current financial year, this includes work on preventing violence against women and girls, modern slavery in supply chains and, in previous financial years, on encouraging female participation and representation in Parliaments. In addition, the Government has worked with the CPA's International Secretariat on its democracy assessments. This will continue this financial year with assessments planned in Fiji, Tonga and Kiribati, amongst others.

124. Further to this work, the Government is working closely with the Government of Samoa as it prepares to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) in October. This is the first time CHOGM has been hosted in a Pacific Island Country and will be an important part of delivering our Commonwealth and wider Indo-Pacific objectives. The Government has offered, in response to a request by Samoa, technical assistance in specific areas relevant to CHOGM. These discussions are ongoing.

FREEING UP MOVEMENT

41: *The Government should assess Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) provisions supporting business mobility alongside existing commitments in bilateral agreements with countries in the Indo-Pacific such as the FTAs with Australia and New Zealand.* (Paragraph 131)

125. The Government partially agrees. Through CPTPP, the UK has secured a new, deeper trading relationship with the most dynamic and fast-growing economic region in the world. Specifically, the UK has set a new high benchmark on business mobility commitments with Mexico, Chile, and Malaysia while building on our existing bilateral trading framework with members like Canada, Singapore, New Zealand and Peru. Entry into force will take place once both the UK and relevant CPTPP Parties have finished their legislative processes. We expect this to happen in the second half of this year. When the UK's accession to the CPTPP enters into force, UK businesses will be able to trade with CPTPP members on preferential terms, using either CPTPP or any bilateral agreement.

126. 42: We recommend that the Government examine current visa procedures with a view to facilitating entry for those visiting the UK from Indo-Pacific partner countries for purposes such as studying, teaching or doing business. (Paragraph 132)

127. The Government partially agrees. The Government keeps the UK's immigration rules under review. In the Spring Budget statement, the Government stated that in order to make it easier and more attractive to do business in the UK, we will simplify business visitor rules. This includes expanding the range of short-term business activities that can be carried out for periods of up to six months and reviewing permitted paid engagements.

128. Visit visas are an important part of securing the UK's border and are an effective tool in reducing illegal immigration, tackling organised crime and protecting national security. Decisions on changes are always taken in the round and following extensive engagement across government. Any decision will consider a range of factors, which will vary globally, but often include security, compliance, returns, and prosperity.

129. Our service standard for processing visit applications is 15 working days from biometric submission. Anyone that requires a decision quicker can use the Priority Visa (decision in 5 days) or Super Priority Visa (decision in 24 hours) service for an additional cost. The Visa Application Centres also offer additional paid Added Value Services (AVS) to support various needs, such as express courier return, prime time appointments, keep passport while applying. The services offered vary by location.

ASEAN

43: It is vital to pursue links with Southeast Asian countries on both multilateral and bilateral tracks, respecting different value-systems and cultures. (Paragraph 135)

44: We recommend that as well as taking full advantage of the UK's recently acquired status as a Dialogue Partner of ASEAN, the UK should begin negotiations for an FTA with ASEAN, and concentrate equally on building bilateral relationships with ASEAN members based upon cooperation on those countries' development objectives and UK expertise and experience in such areas as maritime security, finance, environmentally-friendly agriculture and technology. (Paragraph 137)

45: A proximate objective should be the signing of wide-ranging agreements, like those the UK has with Malaysia and Indonesia, with other ASEAN member countries as appropriate, and where possible upgrading existing strategic partnership agreements to Economic and Financial Dialogues. (Paragraph 138)

130. The Government partially agrees. The Government is committed to taking full advantage of the opportunities afforded by the ASEAN-UK Dialogue Partnership both through our engagement with ASEAN as a bloc and through bilateral engagement with ASEAN Member States. We also recognise the need for a tailored approach that respects the region's diversity. Based on the Plan of Action we agreed with ASEAN in August 2022, we are bringing the Dialogue Partnership to life in the areas highlighted by the Committee including maritime security, financial services and sustainable development. This multilateral work with ASEAN complements our growing bilateral engagement with countries of the region as set out for example in the UK-Indonesia Roadmap agreed in 2022 and the UK-Singapore Strategic Partnership agreed in September 2023.

131. The UK-Singapore Strategic Partnership sets an overall framework for cooperation underpinned by sector-specific mechanisms such as our bilateral Free Trade Agreement, Digital Economy Agreement and Financial Dialogue. In August 2023, the former Foreign Secretary signed a Joint Statement of Intent on a UK-Philippines Enhanced Partnership

including deeper cooperation on trade, investment and economic development. With Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and other partners across the region, we continue to strengthen bilateral collaboration across areas such as trade and investment, climate change, maritime security and science and technology. In several cases (e.g. Indonesia, Thailand), the partnership is underpinned by a bilateral “Joint Economic and Trade Committee.”

132. The UK has bilateral FTAs with Singapore and Vietnam and our accession to CPTPP will further reinforce our economic ties with these countries as well as with Malaysia and Brunei. Total UK trade with ASEAN increased by 21.4 per cent from £38.3 billion in 2021 to £46.5 billion in 2022, with the UK becoming the seventh largest foreign direct investor into ASEAN. We are considering the case for an ASEAN-UK FTA alongside a range of other options and will make announcements at the appropriate moment. In the meantime, through initiatives such as the ASEAN-UK Digital Innovation Partnership, we continue to deepen our economic connections with this dynamic region and open doors for British business. We have also supported strong UK private sector participation in the annual ASEAN Business and Investment Summit and are using the British Investment Partnerships toolkit to promote public/private collaboration in areas such as renewable energy.

46: Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the region should be targeted on regulatory improvement to strengthen the rule of law and build an effective business environment to encourage both domestic and inward investment. Progress on this should be measured by establishing a model composed of indicators based on World Bank and OECD business-friendliness criteria against which each country can be assessed annually. (Paragraph 139)

133. The Government agrees on the importance of supporting an effective business environment in ASEAN, including through regulatory reform to support stronger and more equitable growth and development. The new ASEAN-UK Economic Integration Programme announced by the former Foreign Secretary during his visit to Jakarta in July 2023 will target UK Official Development Assistance to promote regulatory excellence, open trade and financial services development in South-East Asia. While this forms an important part of the UK’s ODA portfolio in South-East Asia, we are also using ODA to support a range of other priorities under the ASEAN-UK Dialogue Partnership including girls’ education, public health and action to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

TAIWAN

47: The UK Government should support visits by trade, science and education ministers both inward and outward with Taiwan. (Paragraph 151)

48: Now that the UK is a full member of CPTPP it can and should campaign for Taiwan to be admitted. (Paragraph 155)

49: [The UK’s “One China” policy is not the same as China’s “One China” principle. Rather than agreeing to China’s claim to Taiwan, the UK, like other liberal democracies, merely acknowledges Beijing’s position.] This policy of acknowledgment needs to be better understood across Whitehall departments to prevent policymakers from

misspeaking or acting over-cautiously when it comes to interacting with Taiwan and Taiwanese officials. As part of this, the importance of the Taiwan strait, as a safeguard, should be understood. (Paragraph 165)

50: The UK needs to build on its existing cooperation with Taiwan and with like-minded partner countries to help achieve Taiwan's peaceful objectives and strengthen its resilience. This is not a threat to the CCP, but a friendship with a fellow democracy. (Paragraph 166)

51: The UK Government must identify meaningful activities, and red lines, that enable it to shape and pursue an effective policy of deterrence diplomacy to contribute to the protection of the right of self-determination of the people of Taiwan. The last two decades are mired in failures to deter autocratic countries from pursuing sovereignty through violence and coercion. (Paragraph 168)

134. 52: The UK should engage with Taiwanese and other major companies to secure inward investment in the semiconductor and wind industries in the UK to enhance resilience by building an alternative supply source for advanced semiconductors and wind energy components, whether this involves onshoring or friendshoring. (Paragraph 169)

53: The Government should press for Taiwan to take its place in international bodies, including the WHO, the OECD, the IEA and the CPTPP, for the benefit of all countries. (Paragraph 170)

54: We recommend that the Government this year publish a plan to scale up its cooperation with Taiwan over the next five years on English language teaching in Taiwan and Mandarin teaching in the UK to meet the requirements of Taiwan's Bilingual 2030 programme and the UK's need to reduce dependence on Confucius Institutes, especially in secondary schools where breaches of freedom of speech will be an issue, just as they have been in universities. (Paragraph 171)

135. The UK's longstanding position on Taiwan has not changed. The UK has no diplomatic relations with Taiwan but a strong, unofficial relationship, based on deep and growing ties in a wide range of areas and underpinned by shared democratic values. The UK has a clear interest in peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. We consider the Taiwan issue one to be settled peacefully by the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait through constructive dialogue, without the threat or use of force or coercion. We do not support any unilateral attempts to change the status quo. This includes increased Chinese assertiveness towards Taiwan.

136. The Government has stated the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait alongside our G7 partners. We agree with the recommendation to build on existing cooperation with Taiwan and likeminded partner countries - the Government remains in regular contact with our G7 and other like-minded partners on our shared priorities. We are increasingly concerned by the consequences should peace and stability fail in the Taiwan Strait - including to global supply chains and the global economy. China's continued military activity near Taiwan is part of an ongoing pattern of escalatory activity and not conducive to peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. The Government agrees with the importance of capability and understanding across government departments on Taiwan and regularly circulates guidance on UK engagement with Taiwan and will continue to do so.

137. As part of the UK's deep and growing ties with Taiwan in a wide range of areas, we continue to engage on economic, trade, educational and cultural issues. The Government agrees with the importance of visits as part of these longstanding areas of cooperation between the UK and Taiwan and already supports a wide range of exchanges and visits, including on trade, science and educational issues. The recent inward visits of Audrey Tang, Taiwan's Minister for Digital Affairs and Wu Tsung-tsong, Minister of the National Science and Technology Council of Taiwan and Deputy Minister of Education, Mon-Chi Lio demonstrate this commitment. The UK and Taiwan have a long-standing trade relationship with annual ministerial trade talks held since 1991; in November 2022, then Minister of State for International Trade, Greg Hands, visited Taiwan for the talks and the latest iteration took place on 6 November 2023 in London. On 8 November 2023, British Representative John Dennis and Taipei Representative Kelly Hsieh signed an Enhanced Trade Partnership (ETP) Arrangement which sets out the UK's and Taiwan's priorities for future ETP discussions under three key areas: two-way investment; digital trade; and energy and net zero. The Government agrees with the importance of visits to support these longstanding areas of cooperation between the UK and Taiwan.

138. The UK is a world leader in offshore wind and the UK and Taiwan have strong trade and investment links in this sector. During the fifth UK-Taiwan Energy Dialogue last year, the two sides discussed long-term challenges and opportunities in this area and met innovative British firms exhibiting in the UK Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult stand at the Global Offshore Wind expo. As set out in the Government's Semiconductor Strategy, we are also working with international partners to improve supply chain resilience for critical sectors, such as through improving transparency across the supply chain and ensuring government investments provide some protection against significant supply shocks.

139. We partially agree with the Committee's recommendation on Taiwan's place in international organisations. We believe the people of Taiwan have a valuable contribution to make on issues of global concern. The UK therefore supports Taiwanese participation in international organisations as a member where statehood is not a prerequisite and as an observer or guest where it is. This includes support for Taiwan as an observer at the World Health Assembly and participation in relevant WHO technical meetings, as stated in the UK national statement at the 2023 WHA. We welcome CPTPP members' willingness to expand the CPTPP group. Membership is open to all economies willing and able to meet the high standards of the agreement and with a demonstrated pattern of complying with their trade commitments. The UK's priority now is the key parliamentary processes needed to take place before the deal can be ratified, so we will not be commenting on the specifics of any other economies' interest in the agreement.

140. The Government recognises concerns about overseas interference in our higher education sector, including through Confucius Institutes and regularly assesses the risks facing academia. The British Council are active in Taiwan and have strong links with the Ministry of Education, particularly in relation to improving English language proficiency.

Countries

JAPAN AND KOREA

55: We welcome the UK-Japan Digital Partnership signed in December 2022, under which the two countries will cooperate more closely in 14 areas. (Paragraph 191)

141. The Government agrees with the Committee's conclusion. The Digital Partnership has turbocharged UK-Japan joint working in an era of increasing global competition on tech and data. The partnership has practical application. For example, it has already contributed to an agreement between both countries to collaborate on ensuring app security and privacy. To further strengthen our science and technology cooperation the UK and Japan have agreed, through the Hiroshima Accord, to a Semiconductors Partnership. This will serve as a foundation to draw on each other's strengths, expertise and physical infrastructure in the semiconductor sector, while also working together to strengthen the resilience of semiconductor supply chains. While renewing our longstanding Science and Technology Agreement for the twenty-first century, with a focus on innovation and game-changing new technologies.

56: We also welcome the signing of the UK-Republic of Korea bilateral framework of cooperation in June 2022 and the July 2022 data adequacy agreement signed between the UK and the Republic of Korea, as well as the February 2022 Digital Economy Agreement between the UK and Singapore. (Paragraph 192)

142. The Government agrees with the Committee's conclusion. 2023 marked 140 years of UK and Republic of Korea diplomatic relations. The signing of the UK-ROK Downing Street Accord in November last year builds on our existing bilateral framework and will put the UK ahead of European comparators in engaging this tech superpower. The UK-ROK Bilateral Framework for Closer Cooperation, agreed in June 2022, committed both partners to a comprehensive new Digital Partnership. This Partnership, launched during the State Visit, will provide a structured framework to strengthen bilateral cooperation in data, facilitate deeper cooperation across various technology themes including AI, future telecoms and cyber security. These developments help to formalise and structure our political and economic engagement and are tangible advancements of the UK's Indo-Pacific approach.

143. The data bridge regulation (previously referred to as data adequacy) made by the UK Government and the Republic of Korea came into effect on 19 December 2022. The Government announced nine priority countries for adequacy by the UK in August of 2021, which were: Republic of Korea, Australia, Colombia, Dubai International Financial Centre, Singapore, United States, Brazil, Kenya and Indonesia.

144. The UK is undertaking a robust and detailed approach with all adequacy assessments, as it has done with the Republic of Korea, to ensure any future decision meets the high standards of protection required for the transfer of UK citizens' data.

57: The Government should establish a timetable for signing a digital partnership agreement with the Republic of Korea similar to the one the UK has with Japan within the framework of the 2022 UK-Korea bilateral framework of cooperation. This should include cooperation on ensuring a reliable supply of semiconductors. (Paragraph 198)

145. The Government agrees with the Committee. The November State Visit saw the launch of an ambitious new Digital Partnership between our respective digital ministries. Led on the UK side by the Department Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), the Partnership will build on and foster collaboration across shared priorities, including telecoms supply chain diversification, semiconductors, artificial intelligence and cyber security. DSIT have also engaged with Korean counterparts specifically on the issue of semiconductor supply chain resilience. Our UK-ROK Downing Street Accord commits us to improve the resilience of semiconductor supply chains through both bilateral activities and cooperation in multilateral fora. This will be underpinned by commitments set out under the UK-ROK Framework for Semiconductor Cooperation, which will strengthen cooperation in this sector.

59: *The UK should negotiate with Japan an agreement on expanded cooperation on the teaching of English in Japan and Japanese in the UK.* (Paragraph 200)

146. The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendation. Language ability is an important enabler of the people-to-people connections that underpin all our bilateral cooperation. Through the Hiroshima Accord, the UK and Japan have agreed to re-vitalise people-to-people exchanges including those in tourism, education and study opportunities including Japanese and English languages, as well as research cooperation, culture and art and the working holiday/youth mobility scheme.

INDIA

60: [Protecting national interests requires a continuation of the UK's strong naval presence in the West Indian Ocean sector of the Indo-Pacific region that should be increasingly coordinated with like-minded countries, in particular France, the United States and India, to sustain and strengthen the UK's key role there.] India's partnership with Australia, Japan and the US in the Quad offers a golden opportunity to strengthen these defence ties and the UK should be directly involved in it as a full member. (Paragraph 207)

147. The Government partially agrees with the Committee's recommendations relating to the Indo-Pacific Quad. The Indo-Pacific Quad members are already amongst the UK's closest partners in the region, and we welcome the collaborative efforts of Australia, India, Japan, and the US on critical issues such as climate change, health security and maritime security and the importance of this grouping for our shared objective of a free and open Indo-Pacific. We will continue to work with Quad members bilaterally and multilaterally on these issues. Membership of the Quad is not necessary for the UK to deliver this practical cooperation.

61: *The UK Government should review recent Indian legislation around transparency of ownership and consider whether any measures therein could be adopted in British legislation. The UK should prioritise big data, AI, biological engineering and tech manufacturing relationships with India. There is an opportunity for the UK to work with India in the joint shaping of global norms and standards for many areas of joint interest, in particular intellectual property, data and biological engineering.* (Paragraph 208)

148. The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendations relating to technology partnerships with India. We are committed to building a partnership with

India with activity spanning government, academic and business collaboration across a range of technologies as well as the cross-cutting issue of data. The partnership will advance the UK and India's shared priorities, including supply chain resilience, the responsible use of AI and will deliver tangible new activities such as a joint research collaboration on future telecoms and closer collaboration on critical minerals.

149. We will also continue to work with India to shape global norms and standards, recognising the impact that these will have on the development of technologies globally, as well as our own science and technology sectors. This includes on data and AI, for example through mechanisms such as the AI Safety Summit and the Global Partnership on AI. Partnerships on advanced manufacturing and bio-engineering are flourishing between key institutions in both countries. For example, the UK's Centre for Processed Innovations has worked extensively with India's National Chemical Laboratory on the manufacturing of silver nanowires and will now set up a joint "living lab" environment to develop sustainable medicines manufacturing technologies, which will improve productivity and support decarbonisation.

62: [The UK and India have completed seven rounds of negotiations on the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which should boost trade and investment between the two countries.] We are concerned that the pace of negotiations should be maintained so that agreement can be reached as soon as practicable. (Paragraph 209)

150. The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendation to maintain the pace of FTA negotiations to help move talks forward but will not sign an FTA until we have secured a deal in the best interests of the UK. The thirteenth round of negotiations ran from 18 September to 15 December 2023. The fourteenth round of negotiations is taking place this month and intensive talks are ongoing.

151. The Government is also committed to progressing negotiations through senior engagement with the Government of India. The Prime Minister spoke with Prime Minister Modi on 3 November 2023 where they discussed recent progress and agreed on the importance of securing an ambitious deal that benefitted both sides. This followed the Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP, the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, attending the G20 Trade Ministerial Meeting in August. While in Delhi, the Minister met with Shri Piyush Goyal, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, for the Government of India. The pair discussed ways to progress negotiations towards the FTA and agreed to stay in contact.

63: *We recommend that the Government set a deadline for the early conclusion of negotiations on the India-UK FTA. Unless already included in the FTA, the Government should also consider negotiating agreements with India similar to the UK-Australia supply chain and critical minerals agreements to establish shared principles of supply chain risk identification and mitigation. The UK should seek to increase its reliance on India for manufacturing and pursue enhanced maritime security co-operation.* (Paragraph 213)

152. While the Government recognises that there is value to concluding negotiations as soon as reasonably practicable, we do not agree with the Committee's recommendation to set a deadline for the early conclusion of negotiations. We are committed to negotiating at pace but will not sign until we have secured a deal in the best interests of the UK.

153. Separately, recent geopolitical events and disruptions have shown how crucial strong supply chains are to building a resilient UK which can withstand and proactively tackle the challenges of today and the future. The Government is working with a wide range of international partners to identify and collaborate on shared supply chain issues, sign agreements and bring down market barriers. Recent examples are our critical minerals agreements with Canada and Australia and the UK-Republic of Korea Memorandum of Understanding and recently-established UK-ROK Critical Minerals Joint Working Group which will boost cooperation and supports our goal of strengthening supply chain resilience.

154. The UK relies on resilient global supply chains and imports for a consistent and predictable flow of critical goods which ensure the stability and functioning of our economy, including our health system and essential services. Strong and resilient global supply chains have a diverse supply base, which relies on an open international trading system and our priority is to work with allies and partners across the globe to promote it.

155. The Government recognises the importance of resilient and diversified manufacturing supply chains. We already increasingly trade and cooperate with India across a range of sectors and are aware of the manufacturing strengths India holds and is seeking to grow. For instance, areas such as electronics manufacturing. Increased trade and cooperation with India will bring greater choice, competition, innovation and security, for businesses and consumers in both our countries. Evidence of this cooperation can be seen with the recent Tata Group decision to invest over £4 billion in a new UK gigafactory. Indian foreign direct investment in the UK in 2021 was worth around £9.3 billion.

156. The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendation on enhancing maritime security cooperation with India and is already pursuing this objective. The 2030 Roadmap for India-UK Future Relations commits to promoting freedom of navigation, open access and improving maritime cooperation through a partnership in the Indian Ocean, with a new Maritime Dialogue, Grey (military vessels) and Dark (illegal vessels) shipping information sharing, a Logistics Memorandum of Understanding and mechanisms for operational co-ordination.

157. Indian Prime Minister Modi furthermore launched the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) in 2019; it has seven distinct pillars, one of which is on maritime security. In March 2022, India and the UK agreed to joint leadership of the Maritime Security Pillar of IPOI during a visit to New Delhi by the then Foreign Secretary. Under this Pillar, the UK and India agreed to work towards a safer, more secure and open Indo-Pacific region resilient to transnational issues, including trafficking, natural disasters, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, other transnational crime and governed by international law.

64: *The Government should also seek to support student numbers to grow from India, but also expand our Science and Technology co-operation, putting it at the centre of our ambitions with our Indian partners.* (Paragraph 214)

158. The Government partially agrees with the Committee's recommendation on growing student numbers. International students, including the more than 140,000 from India, make a vital cultural and educational contribution to the Higher Education sector and to the UK as a whole. Indian students make up the largest number of sponsored study visas granted in the year ending June 2023. There were 142,848 study visas granted in year

ending June 2023, an increase of 49,883 (+54%) compared to the year ending June 2022. We are proud to commit to hosting at least 600,000 international students in the UK every year by 2030 and welcome the Indian students that make up these numbers.

159. Nevertheless, as a policy, we do not commit to increases in student markets from specific countries. The UK's offer to international students remains very competitive and we are committed to ensuring the UK remains a destination of choice for international students from across the globe.

160. Separately, the Government agrees with the Committee's recommendation on expanding our Science and Technology (S&T) cooperation with India and recognises the importance of India as a long-term S&T partner for the UK, which will positively contribute to future jobs, investment, and innovation. The 2030 Roadmap for India-UK Future Relations includes commitments to technological collaboration that improves the lives and livelihoods of our citizens and to establishing India-UK leadership in climate, clean energy and health. This includes building on the two countries' existing bilateral research, science and innovation infrastructure to continue to support high-quality, high-impact research and innovation through joint ventures. We have a number of channels for doing so, including the Science and Innovation Council which is led at ministerial level by both countries. During the most recent Council meeting in April 2023, the UK and India signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding on research and innovation which will enable quicker, deeper collaboration on science between our countries. Moreover, India was named as a partner for the UK's International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF), carrying forward the UK-India science partnership built through the Newton-Bhabha Fund. Since 2014, Newton-Bhabha has jointly funded over 700 projects through 44 programmes, providing grants to over 3,000 researchers and innovators and establishing collaborations between almost 1,200 UK and Indian institutions.

INDONESIA

65: The UK's approach to Indonesia should be underpinned by sufficient diplomatic capacity and greater political willingness than it is currently perceived to have. (Paragraph 216)

161. The Government agrees that the importance of the UK's relationship with Indonesia needs to be underpinned by sufficient diplomatic capacity and political engagement. Since the Integrated Review was published in March 2021, we have increased our diplomatic capacity in Indonesia in line with our strategic ambition for the relationship in this twenty-first century emerging giant. Our increased diplomatic presence in Indonesia is on a par with our key European partners. This diplomatic capacity on the ground has been backed by an increase in ministerial engagement including four Foreign Secretary visits to Indonesia in the last two years, most recently in July 2023. The Prime Minister has met Indonesian President Joko Widodo twice in the last 12 months. Ministerial engagement has expanded in a wide range of other areas, including recent visits to Jakarta by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Energy Security Minister.

162. This increased engagement has helped drive progress against the UK-Indonesia Roadmap signed in 2022. This includes a 30% increase in trade since 2022, supported by our new Joint Economic and Trade Committee and Investment Memorandum of

Understanding; the UK's commitment to Indonesia's net zero future through the \$20 billion Just Energy Transition Partnership; and a new Memorandum of Understanding on Cyber Security Cooperation.

163. The Government agrees that the UK should maintain and develop cooperation with Indonesia including through multilateral fora. We worked closely with Indonesia to support their G20 Presidency in 2022 and the UK Mission to ASEAN worked closely with Indonesia to support their objectives as ASEAN Chair in 2023. At the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the UK used our chairmanship of the annual Ministerial Council Meeting in June 2023 to promote the OECD's engagement with the Indo-Pacific region and has subsequently welcomed Indonesia's interest in joining the OECD.

PACIFIC ISLANDS

66: *We encourage repeat visits by the Foreign Secretary to the Pacific Islands at appropriate intervals and recommend that the Government consider attending Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) meetings such as the PIF leaders meeting. We also recommend setting up a UK-Pacific Islands consultative body to widen and deepen cooperation between the UK and the Pacific Islands, in addition to continued focus on Partners in the Blue Pacific and expanded cooperation with individual Pacific Island countries.* (Paragraph 255)

164. The Government agrees that engagement with Pacific Islands and regional institutions needs to be sustained and long-term. During his visit to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands in April 2023, the then Foreign Secretary met with Heads of Government and made clear the Government's intention to create genuine and equal partnerships with Pacific Island Countries and to deliver on their priorities. The Minister for the Indo-Pacific attended the Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting in November 2023 and UK Ministers will remain engaged in the Pacific.

165. Continued engagement through the Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP) initiative will allow the UK to build on its longstanding commitment to the region, through coordination with partners and commitment to deliver in line with Pacific priorities. The Government also recognises the importance of strengthening bilateral relationships with Pacific Islands, which is predominantly done through the six UK Diplomatic Missions in Pacific Island Countries (three of which have been opened in the past four years). While the Government is not looking to create a separate consultative body, widening and deepening corporation with Pacific Island Countries on both a bilateral and regional level will continue to be a priority.

67: *The Government should explain if, and, if so, how it is supporting the Pacific Partnership and other efforts to end violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the Pacific Islands.* (Paragraph 256)

166. The Government agrees with the Committee. The UK contributed to the Pacific Partnership programme through core funding to UN Women, legacy contributions to the EU Development Fund (EDF) and renewed membership of the South Pacific Community. The Government will continue to support gender and equalities work in the Pacific, most of which will continue to be delivered through contributions to multilateral development organisations, including UN Women. Since 2014, the UK has contributed £25.5 million to

the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women supporting grassroots organisations around the world, including in the Pacific, to respond to gender-based violence. The UK Gender and Equalities Envoy visited the region in October 2023 and discussed with Pacific partners how the UK can work with them to reduce Gender Based Violence.