



House of Commons
Foreign Affairs Committee

**Government response
to the Committee's First
Report of Session
2021–22: In the room:
the UK's role in
multilateral diplomacy**

**Second Special Report of
Session 2021–22**

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The Foreign Affairs Committee

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Second Special Report

On 17 June 2021, the Foreign Affairs Committee published its First Report of Session 2021–22, *In the room: the UK's role in multilateral diplomacy* (HC 199). The Government's response was received on 6 August 2021 and is appended below.

Appendix: Government Response

Introduction

The UK remains deeply committed to multilateralism. The UK is proud to have played its part in the evolution of multilateralism, both as one of the founding members of the United Nations and as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council. The multilateral system encompasses the institutions and underpins the values which keep us safe today. In this 75th anniversary year, we reaffirmed our commitment to the principles of the UN, celebrating the first UN General Assembly meeting in London with a virtual visit from the UN Secretary-General.

Our fundamental interests—peace, security and prosperity—depend on a functioning multilateral system of rules and norms. The Integrated Review set out the UK's commitment to be a force for good in the world—defending openness, democracy and human rights—and our increased determination to seek multilateral solutions to global challenges. It also made clear that we would need to move from the status quo within the post-Cold War international system to dynamically shaping the post-COVID order into future frontiers such as cyberspace and space. The UK is committed to working with our partners, including in the G7 and G20, to achieve this vision. The UK also recognises the need for the system, with the UN at the centre, to evolve and become more representative in order to remain effective, relevant and fit for purpose. Only through collective action can we tackle the big challenges facing the world, such as climate change; ocean pollution; and global health pandemics.

We will play a more active part in international institutions including the UN, WTO, NATO and WHO and the international financial institutions that we are members of, as well as enhancing our alliances and collaboration with partner organisations—including as Dialogue Partner to the ASEAN group of nations and with the African Union (AU). We will also influence change and the election of excellent UK nationals to senior posts across the multilateral system, seconding UK nationals into organisations and leveraging expertise from UK businesses and civil society.

Multilateral Reform

If the UK and its allies do not respond to the corrosive influence of states, including China and Russia and other enabling states, there is a very real risk that democratic states will lose multilateral organisations to authoritarian states who have done little to demonstrate that they wish to uphold the values these organisations represent. In responding, we caution against initiating processes for large-scale reform that could be used to further dilute the mandates and underlying principles of these organisations. The real test for reshaping these institutions back to their original purpose is effort. The

question is whether the UK Government is willing to put in the effort and commitment to make the changes we need. (Paragraph 15)

The Government agrees with the Committee that the UK and like-minded partners need to continue to defend the multilateral system and protect the mandates and values of individual organisations from those who seek to undermine them. We are consistently active in doing so in negotiations and in bilateral and multilateral discussions across the international system.

The Government will continue to be a staunch defender of the multilateral system and its principles of peaceful cooperation to deliver shared security, mutual prosperity and shared values. The Government is clear that we must not lose sight of our core values, such as respect for the rule of law and international commitments and the defence of human rights.

The Government agrees that large-scale reform, subject to intergovernmental negotiation, comes with potential risks as well as benefits. Reform should not be seen as an end in itself but a means to ensure that multilateral organisations are effective, efficient and uphold the values on which they were founded.

While the UK is actively engaged in work to modernise multilateral organisations, the Government recognises that the main focus should remain the day-to-day operations of these organisations and ensuring they remain true to their original mandates. We will continue to use a range of approaches to pursue our interests and drive improvements in organisational effectiveness and performance.

Funding of Multilateral Organisations

As far as funding is concerned, we note that the agendas of multilateral organisations can be significantly influenced by their donors, even those who give comparatively little support. Whilst many state donors' intentions in this respect may currently be predominantly benign, there are significant risks that states will use this mechanism to exert influence and control over the agendas of multilateral organisations. It also leaves organisations less able to respond quickly to emerging situations and deprived of core costs for covering key aspects of their mandate. In some cases, organisations have exercised poor judgement in their choice of funding partners, choices that have damaged their reputation. (Paragraph 20)

The demands placed on multilateral organisations mean that many will remain reliant on a combination of assessed, voluntary and innovative funding. We recognise that donors can have an influence on individual organisations and indeed believe that as one of the biggest contributors of voluntary funding to many multilateral organisations the UK has been able to exert a positive influence on them. For example, since 2018, 30% of our core funding to the New York-based Development agencies is subject to them delivering reform.

We agree that not all countries share our values, and that some actively seek to undermine them. It is only by continuing to make the case and demonstrate the benefits for all that we can broaden the consensus in favour of an international order based on respect for

human rights, the rule of law and shared global norms. Nonetheless, we agree with the Committee that some funding choices come with risks. We will continue to monitor this and raise with the leadership of specific institutions where we believe this risk is too great.

Urgent clarity is needed with respect to the priority the UK Government will give to multilateral funding above and beyond its statutory obligations. With the prospect of less Government funding available for voluntary contributions to some multilateral organisations, the FCDO needs to ensure that this funding is delivered in a way that maximises effectiveness. The voluntary core funding model (as applied at the WHO) represents an innovative solution to strengthening multilateral organisations against subversion of their mandate through exploitation of their funding mechanisms. (Paragraph 30)

We make assessed contributions to relevant multilateral organisations—primarily specialised agencies and the United Nations (regular budget)—of which the UK is a member. These are obligatory and usually a condition of our membership. The UK continues to pay its assessed contributions to multilateral institutions on time and in full to help ensure they have the resources needed to carry out their core functions.

We provide voluntary funding to funds and programmes which do not have an assessed budget, when they support UK priorities and values, and where they are the most effective and efficient means of achieving UK objectives. This funding may be voluntary non-earmarked funding, which supports multilateral organisations to deliver across the breadth of their strategic priorities, or it may be voluntary earmarked funding for specific projects. Voluntary funding allows us to decide which organisations to fund, and the size of our contribution. This allows the flexibility to direct money towards UK priorities.

We have provided voluntary funding on both an earmarked and non-earmarked basis. For example, in 2019, the UK provided UNICEF with an earmarked contribution of just over US\$338mn and a non-earmarked contribution of just under US\$18mn. The Committee has noted the UK contribution of voluntary core-funding to the WHO. The UK has committed to a new £340mn voluntary contribution to WHO over the next four years linked to achievement of reform objectives. We will fully evaluate this funding mechanism at the end of the four years and draw lessons for how it could be applied to other multilateral organisations.

Even with a temporary ODA reduction to 0.5%, the UK still remains a top donor to the multilateral system (£3.159bn on core multilateral funding in 2021–22). However the reduction means we will need to prioritise carefully and to find the most effective ways of working with the system and international partners to protect our interests.

While we can understand the attraction of bypassing multilaterals, and even withdrawing altogether, the UK not only has a responsibility to engage, but absence ensures that its interests will suffer more. It is near-impossible to advance national interest by proxy and presence is the only guarantee of the UK being heard. Engagement blunts the influence of those who would manipulate and undermine these organisations. This engagement requires the Government to match its rhetorical support with financial support above and beyond its statutory contributions. (Paragraph 33)

The UK remains steadfast in its support for multilateral organisations. In 2019, the UK was the third largest overall contributor to the UN system (just under US\$3.5bn), the sixth

largest contributor of assessed contributions (just over US\$703mn), largest donor of non-core voluntary contributions (just over US\$2.3bn) and the fourth largest donor of core voluntary contributions (just over US\$447mn).

In addition to funding, we look for other ways to support the organisation while protecting and promoting UK values and objectives—e.g. by harnessing our world class thought leadership and diplomatic network and supporting the efforts of UK candidates in multilateral elections and appointments.

Coordination of Engagement and Building Alliances

We welcome the strong leadership demonstrated by the FCDO in collaboratively working across government departments to secure effective engagement with multilateral organisations. We also recognise the significant successes the UK has achieved in exerting positive influence in the secretariats of multilateral organisations. These actions have a strengthening effect on the respective organisations in the face of states that may interfere or misuse them. We nonetheless believe that there are opportunities for the FCDO to take a still greater role in coordinating engagement looking to build ad hoc alliances that promote the standards and values we share with other democracies and rule-of-law states. (Paragraph 27)

We thank the Committee for recognising the coordinating role played by the FCDO, and agree with the FAC that competition for international roles is increasingly fierce with candidates from some countries backed with significant resources.

As set out in the Integrated Review, the UK wants to sit at the heart of a network of like-minded countries and flexible groupings, committed to protecting human rights and upholding global norms. The election of British and like-minded candidates to senior roles is an important part of this.

Given increased competition, we will continue to uphold our reputation for fielding exceptionally qualified candidates. The work of FCDO staff globally to help secure successful elections is testament to this. For example, the election of Judge Joanna Korner in the first round of the International Criminal Court (ICC) judicial election in December 2020 – with an unprecedented number of votes for a Western European candidate; and the selection of Karim Khan QC as the first British Prosecutor of the ICC.

Beyond promoting our own candidates, we will continue to coordinate with like-minded countries (as required) to support candidates who best reflect our values in competition for senior international roles, as we did for Singapore's candidacy for Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

We are also using our G7 Presidency to revitalise cooperation between democratic open societies. We invited Australia, India, the Republic of Korea and South Africa as guest countries to join this year's Leaders' Summit and Foreign and Development Ministerial Meetings, as well as the Secretary General of ASEAN, who attended for the first time. Together, we agreed an Open Societies Statement affirming our collective commitment to (among other issues) human rights, democracy, social inclusion, gender equality, freedom of expression, the rule of law and independent and impartial judicial systems.

We support the Government's approach of engagement to uphold the multilateral system, despite the sometimes patchy support from allies, there are opportunities to go further in both calling out abuse of the system and using its influence to strengthen organisations against future capture. (Paragraph 32)

We work with all those who share our values both to strengthen multilateral institutions and to defend them from influences and actors that would undermine them.

The UK is actively involved in reform agendas in the major organisations of which we are a member, including the UN, WTO, OSCE. Our influence comes from a combination of policy and technical expertise, convening power, extensive diplomatic network, thought leadership and financial contributions. We will continue to look at building ad-hoc alliances to help support our priorities. For example, the UK Permanent Representative to the UN in New York co-chairs, with her UAE counterpart, the Group of Friends of the Future of the UN.

The UK also calls out countries that seek to undermine the UN system. For example, in October 2020, for the 20th anniversary of Women Peace and Security (WPS) resolution 1325, Russia attempted to introduce a resolution, which could have unravelled hard-won rights of women in conflict settings and weakened the normative framework. The UK worked with likeminded partners and the resolution failed as ten Member States abstained. If it had succeeded, it would have set a precedent for future resolutions.

In pursuance of this more confident, assertive role in multilateral organisations, we recommend that the Government (Paragraph 34):

- a) **Publicly calls out states who are abusing or undermining the system and publicly votes against attempts by such states to secure key leadership positions for their nationals.**

The UK is a strong defender of human rights and publicly calls out a range of states who are abusing or undermining the system. This particularly applies to states who take opposing positions on issues relating to open societies. There are a number of fora where the UK calls out states that are abusing or undermining the system. These include the Human Rights Council, UN Security Council, UN Third Committee, in Parliament and in public. We also use other tools, most notably Magnitsky sanctions.

In addition, the UK is pushing back against efforts to restrict civil society access at the United Nations. We are leading efforts to allow for more inclusive civil society participation at key UN meetings and events. Our efforts have included lobbying other likeminded states to be more vocal; proposing amendments to restrictive texts, and calling votes on counter amendments put forward by other states.

- b) **Continues prioritising candidates for key positions in multilateral organisations who are likely to uphold the modern international system and are qualified for the role, rather than entering into political horse trading.**

We agree that senior international roles should be filled on the basis of merit and qualifications, and that international candidates should be committed to upholding the values of a rules based international system. Where we put forward our own candidates, we ensure they are exemplars in their field, as is clearly evidenced by the UK's candidate

for the International Law Commission (ILC) election in 2021, Professor Dapo Akande. He was nominated by Japan, Kenya, Nigeria and Slovenia alongside the UK—the first time an ILC candidate has been nominated by states from four different regional groups. This also serves as an example of where we can and do work with others to support the best candidates for international roles. When there is no suitable UK candidate, we will work with like-minded partners to support high quality candidates from other countries. For example, the UK supported the qualified Singaporean candidate to the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

- c) **Continues to engage with organisations with energy and effort, even if it may consider their credibility and effectiveness to be limited.**

We recognise the need to engage with all parts of the International System, and a range of FCDO policy teams and staff overseas, via the multilateral and bilateral network of Posts, do so on a daily basis. This includes institutions based across the multilateral system, including in Addis Ababa for the African Union; OPCW in The Hague; OSCE in Vienna; or the small mission to ICAO in Montreal, as well as our larger teams in New York and Geneva. We have increased representation in recent years by increasing coordination across FCDO posts in countries that host multilateral institutions, for example, we recently appointed an Ambassador to ASEAN, and secured Dialogue Partner status to the ASEAN group of nations. We have also upgraded our representation to the AU. These actions and successful results demonstrate the creative and ambitious approach the UK is taking to the multilateral agenda.

The nature of the UK's engagement with multilateral organisations has changed with its departure from the EU. We recommend that the FCDO maintains an active stance in the face of states that seek to undermine multilateral bodies. The FCDO should mobilise its soft power and convening resources to work with broad groups of like-minded states within multilateral organisations to counter the influence of member states that seek to undermine the effectiveness and legitimacy of these organisations. (Paragraph 42)

The UK is in a strong position to confidently represent and defend our national interests and values. We collaborate with a broad range of partners and groupings, including in the UN General Assembly, and exert influence through our active role in governing bodies through leveraging our significant financial investments and by working with partners and allies in coalitions of the willing around specific issues. We also influence change through the election of UK nationals to senior posts across the multilateral system, seconding UK nationals to the secretariat of the various organisations and leveraging expertise from UK businesses and civil society to build our influence internationally.

As stated in paragraph 8.3, where there is no suitable UK candidate, we will collaborate with partners to support exceptional candidates who best reflect our values. For example, for the Director General position of the World Intellectual Property Organisation, a key standard-setting body, we and many others supported an eminently qualified Singaporean candidate, ensuring that this important organisation would be led by an expert who was not only qualified for the position, but would uphold its integrity.

Similarly, in 2018, the UK worked intensively with allies in support of a South Korean candidate for the INTERPOL presidency, using our extensive diplomatic network to seek support for our preferred candidate. The efforts of the UK and close international partners were instrumental in securing the election of the candidate from South Korea.

We recommend the FCDO should take strategic decisions with key allies as to which organisations the UK should prioritise exerting influence over rather than expending diplomatic capital challenging like-minded states for influence. (Paragraph 43)

We continue to work closely with like-minded allies and partners to maintain and the principles of multilateralism. We also collaborate with partners to adapt and reform the international system in order to respond to existing and new global threats and challenges—such as building back better from the health and economic crisis caused by the global pandemic—and to shape an international system fit for purpose to tackle the challenges of the 21st century. We see a considerable opportunity to work more closely with the United States and other like-minded countries on this agenda in the coming years.

Whilst the prospect of wholesale US disengagement from the multilateral system has receded, Washington's issues with some multilateral organisations remain. Within a partnership determined to bolster multilaterals and defend their missions, the UK Government is well placed to facilitate broader discussion whether or not it shares the US position on specific issues. (Paragraph 35)

The UK shares many of the same objectives as the US Administration on engagement with, and reform of, the multilateral system and we agree that the UK Government is well placed to facilitate broader discussion. The UK Government is also willing to speak out publicly where there are specific issues of concern. An example is the International Criminal Court (ICC) where the UK expressed regret for the measures taken by the previous US Administration against ICC employees. The ICC plays an important role in ending impunity for those responsible for the most serious international crimes and the UK remains a staunch supporter of its work. We regularly made clear that officials should be able to carry out their work independently and impartially, without fear of sanction. The UK Government recently welcomed the constructive decision by the current US Administration to repeal sanctions against the ICC, and welcome signals that they will engage more positively with the Court in the future.

2021 provides a chance to showcase US-UK alignment, through supporting President Biden's global democracy drive, including the US-hosted Summit for Democracy, and making the case that open societies, and the international system which underpins them, are best placed to deal with global threats. The UK's G7 and COP26 Presidencies, and our collaboration on e.g. security and humanitarian crises, health and climate priorities will provide a range of opportunities. During President Biden's visit to the UK on 9–13 June, he and the Prime Minister signed a revitalised Atlantic Charter and accompanying Joint Statement, which contained a series of shared commitments covering democracy and multilateral reform, defence and security, climate and nature, science and innovation and global health. Their Joint Statement noted that "The United Nations remains the cornerstone of the international system, and its foundational principles reflect our shared values... The U.K. and U.S. will work with the UN and our international partners to continue to adapt and reform the international system to tackle evolving threats and to

build back better for the 21st century...”

We recommend that the UK harness the full potential of its diplomatic network to counter the threat posed by undermining actors. This should include greater coordination between delegations to organisations in Geneva and those in New York. (Paragraph 36)

Coordination of policy across Government is a central element of our international engagement. Following the creation of FCDO, there are single Business Plans at Post, which incorporate objectives from across HMG, and there is consultation with relevant stakeholders in-year as priorities evolve. The Ambassador is empowered to deliver the diplomatic, development and broader HMG priorities in that country, supported by colleagues from across government. Delegations to different organisations use the FCDO platform. There is a one-HMG approach. Communications teams at Post also deliver communications and engagement across the whole of HMG.

Our Permanent Representatives in New York (Barbara Woodward) and Geneva (Simon Manley) speak regularly to coordinate positions and share information. This is replicated at all levels: our policy teams, including in New York, Geneva and other multilateral delegations, often include colleagues from a range of HMG Departments, deliver a whole-of-HMG effort. For example, on human rights and humanitarian issues in particular, our UN delegations in Geneva and New York work extremely closely together, as well as with colleagues in the UK, and around the FCDO network. The issues and challenges faced are similar and their efforts are mutually reinforcing. In normal times, there is a regular exchange of staff between our missions in Geneva and New York.

The FCDO is actively looking at ways to improve coordination across its network. The FCDO's draft Multilateral Operating Model refers to improving knowledge and understanding of multilateral organisations, and of how multilateral missions work, across FCDO and across HMG; and promoting best practice on good matrix working, including links between multilateral teams, relevant geographic teams and posts and other UK Government departments.

The creation of the FCDO offers an opportunity to strengthen coordination across HMG through enhanced engagement between FCDO policy teams, colleagues in other Government Departments and Posts overseas.

There is a risk that the relationship between the UK Government and multilateral organisations can become siloed in departments. This, in turn, risks limiting its impact across the full spectrum of international activity. It also limits the potential to use the full range of tools at the Government's disposal in addressing malign activities. The FCDO is best placed to take a lead in ensuring that the Government's approach to addressing interference in multilateral organisations is coherent and robust. (Paragraph 37)

Across all our multilateral engagement there is a common focus on building our influence, projecting our values, ensuring institutions deliver for the UK and making the best use of our financial contributions, while also actively looking to address malign activities.

The Integrated Review provides an overarching vision of our international approach, and also informs cross HMG working, including through the International System. Lead

departments have strategies for specific organisations and for thematic areas, working together with all relevant stakeholders across HMG to ensure that objectives are tailored in respect of each individual organisation. The creation of FCDO has led to increased focus on delivery as one HMG in all areas of our multilateral work, including the need to address interference in multilateral organisations coherently and robustly, with FCDO taking the lead.

Senior officials regularly discuss and agree strategic direction for our multilateral engagement, including following publication of the Integrated Review. Whitehall departments coordinate through a Board structure to agree common recommendations on multilateral election priorities.

When states build structures outside the established multilateral bodies, it is essential that they coordinate carefully to ensure the established body becomes a force multiplier not an obstacle. (para 41)

We agree that small groups can add value alongside the multilateral system to better face specific common challenges. The Integrated Review highlights using agile groupings to amplify UK positions as a key feature of UK foreign policy post-EU Exit.

In a year of global leadership, the UK is using the G7 Presidency to revitalise cooperation between democratic open societies to tackle the most pressing global challenges. We are also ensuring the G7 acts as a force multiplier and supports multilateral solutions, for instance sharing most of the 870 million vaccine doses committed at the Leaders' Summit through COVAX. As well as using the G7 during our Presidency, we are strengthening our cooperation with Five Eyes countries, and through the Transatlantic Quad, and looking at options for closer dialogue and practical cooperation with groups we are not a part of (e.g. the Nordic Baltics and Indo-Pacific Quad). Alongside this, we continue to champion the wider multilateral system, for example by driving global action on climate change through the COP26 Climate Conference in November in Glasgow, co-hosted with Italy.

Authoritarian States and the Multilateral System

The failure to anticipate and address growing influence of powers seeking to undermine the interests of cooperation in multilateral organisations is a failure of statecraft. The Chinese Government has used the disengagement of the previous US Administration, and its own increasing economic leverage, to grow and consolidate a leadership role in several multilateral organisations. If unchecked, this trend puts China in an increasingly strong position, which it is likely to use to undermine the underlying principles and mandates of multilaterals, supplanting universal values with concepts that are in the self-interest of the autocratic regime. (Paragraph 19)

The UK stands up for the underlying principles and values of the International System, and we see this as the best defence against authoritarian concepts. We are building alliances including revitalising G7 cooperation between democratic and open societies, tackling the most pressing global challenges.

While China presents itself as a defender of multilateralism, its commitment to the multilateral system continues to be selective. We assess that China supports some aspects of the multilateral system, seeks to modify others, but also seeks to undermine some

established international norms and institutions, including those of importance to us.

The fact that China is an authoritarian state, with different values from ours, presents challenges for the UK and our allies. Such challenges include the narrow interpretation of the UN Charter's principles, efforts to use UN bodies and processes to take forward national priorities or to incorporate the ideology or language of the Chinese Communist Party. This is manifested in a growing contest over international rules and norms.

As a growing power, China's efforts to gain greater profile in multilateral organisations are understandable. It is the second largest contributor to both the regular UN budget and the UN peacekeeping budget. However, China's attempts to orient multilateral organisations towards its national objectives or bend them to its political philosophy pose serious risks for UK interests and liberal elements of the international order.

We welcome US reengagement with the multilateral system and its support for the system's underlying principles and values. We will continue to work with our partners, including the US and across Europe and elsewhere, to defend universal human rights, free and fair trade, and ensure that in areas, such as emerging technology or space, that new rules, norms and standards reflect the values of the UN Charter.

China poses one of the biggest threats to the understanding of individual rights upon which the modern international system is based, yet we recognise that engagement with China through multilateral forums is important for progress on many issues of international concern, including the environment and global health. (Paragraph 38)

There are many areas where engaging with China and encouraging cooperation is in our mutual interests, such as climate change, biodiversity, areas of global health and realising the Sustainable Development Goals. As fellow Permanent Members of the Security Council, we engage frequently to resolve issues of international security and, as contributors of troops to peacekeeping missions and finance to UN operations, we share an interest in the security of our people and efficient management of resources. While we may not always see eye to eye, it is necessary to work with China to achieve our global objectives.

China will host the next Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of Parties (CBD COP) in October, before we host COP26 on climate change. We are working closely with China to ensure we can deliver mutually beneficial outcomes and ambitious action on climate change and biodiversity loss in this 'super year for nature'. Only by working together, and with others, can we harness shared expertise and commitment to address global threats. The UK and China co-chair the UN Group of Friends on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). In April, the UK delivered a high-level dialogue on AMR—the first event at the UN on AMR since 2016—and China helped secure support from other countries for a Call to Action that we negotiated together. As an emerging threat to global health security and part of future pandemic preparedness, tackling AMR is an important policy priority for the UK, and cooperating with China allows us to do this more effectively.

However, we are clear where we disagree, and we will be tough where our values, our security or the integrity of the international system are being undermined.

We recommend that the Government's engagement with multilaterals includes a tactical element of multilateral strategy such that it tracks the activities of authoritarian states within both higher and lower profile multilateral organisations,

reports on implications of any moves to exert influence; and adjusts its interventions accordingly. We recommend that the FCDO should coordinate this unified approach across Whitehall, covering all multilateral organisations. (Paragraph 39)

The FCDO maintains oversight of the UK approach towards the multilateral system, and our posts overseas cover whole of UK Government (not just FCDO) interests. Officials regularly engage with counterparts across UK Government departments, agreeing shared approaches on issues such as multilateral appointments, sanctions and multilateralism more broadly, which help to ensure a coordinated and strategic approach. Our network of posts are an integral part of this engagement, for example, by influencing key stakeholders in the UN and its agencies, providing reporting and analysis of developments and upcoming opportunities and risks, and executing policy delivery on the ground. They keep track of the activities of authoritarian states within multilateral organisations and engage with HMG policy and multilateral leads to protect our interests and values.

When necessary, we also defend our values and priorities within the multilateral system from states who seek to undermine or roll back previous agreements, norms, standards or programmes. We counter authoritarian states' influence in various fora, including the Human Rights Council, World Health Assembly and more. In the UN General Assembly, the UK tracks the influence of states on issues that we care about in the UN (eg votes or statements on a range of issues including civil society access to the UN, sexual and reproductive health rights or specific human rights situations such as Syria or Xinjiang). We continually engage both likeminded and non-like-minded states to counter negative influences on issues of priority to us. Likewise, in the UN Security Council we work to counter adverse influences in Council discussions, statements and legally binding measures, such as sanctions regimes.

The UK recognises the need for the international system to evolve to remain effective, relevant and fit for purpose. Vulnerabilities can be the result of weak institutions or arise from competition and rivalry between states. The relative openness of the international system can be viewed as a strength: it encourages the buy-in and engagement of a broad range of actors. However, it means the agendas of multilateral organisations are contested. We will continue to be vigilant in guarding our own interests and be proactive when states challenge them, building alliances amongst likeminded countries.

Organisation specific recommendations

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

We recommend the UK's approaches to strengthening the OSCE be fully integrated into a wider strategy of moderating Russia's damaging influence on the modern international system and on the democratic mandate of governments of OSCE member states. We recommend it also consider the growing influence of China in Central Asia and other OSCE regions. Steps should be taken to ensure that the OSCE is adequately funded both at headquarter level and field mission level to enable it to function effectively whilst retaining independence from malign agendas. (Paragraph 45a)

The UK engages with all dimensions of the OSCE to support a range of priorities, including deterring Russia from undermining the international rules-based system. We do this through promoting and defending our interests, values and security, and encouraging all

participating States to uphold OSCE principles and commitments. Tackling challenges to Euro-Atlantic security is a key focus of our engagement, in particular, we regularly intervene in the OSCE Permanent Council and Forum for Security Co-operation to hold Russia to account for its actions and challenge its false narratives, particularly regarding its ongoing aggression against Ukraine.

The UK actively champions democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms through our engagement in the OSCE's decision-making and informal bodies, calling out failures to implement OSCE commitments by Russia and other participating States. For example, in October 2020 the UK led partners in invoking an independent investigation, under the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism, into fraudulent elections and human rights violations in Belarus. The UK is supporting all of the recommendations in the report and calls on all partners, and Belarus, to do the same. The recommendations provide a roadmap to a peaceful and negotiated solution in Belarus with the facilitation of the OSCE.

The OSCE can play a role in our work across many fora through which we seek to provide an alternative to the growing influence of China. Our support to field missions helps to encourage democracy and respect for human rights across Central Asia and to sustain the implementation of all OSCE principles and commitments in the region. We will remain alert to occasional opportunities to raise concerns on aspects of China's activity, which are in tension with participating States' OSCE commitments, for example on issues like supply chains and forced labour. The OSCE Network of think tanks and academic institutions released a [report](#) on China's Belt and Road Initiative which provides useful insight and sets out the challenges. The Asian Partners for Co-operation Group occasionally raises issues including the 'non-traditional' security threat posed by China.

We consistently work to ensure that the OSCE has adequate funding at both headquarters and field mission level to ensure that it can carry out its work effectively across the three dimensions (human; economic and environmental; and political-military). During negotiations on the OSCE Unified Budget—which take place on an annual basis—we seek to prevent the inclusion of any agendas that may be harmful to OSCE work. We promote UK priorities, including pressing for sufficient resources for field missions and institutions, particularly in relation to human rights, rule of law and fundamental freedoms, and efficient use of resources. In addition to our annual subscriptions, we also contribute extra-budgetary funding to bolster work on these priorities. Recent examples include additional funding to support the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the Office of the Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and to strengthen OSCE efforts to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.

The FCDO's approach to supporting OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) monitoring missions, which appears fragmented and inconsistent, requires improvement. Greater clarity on the "new capability" for election monitoring, as outlined in the Integrated Review, should be provided as soon as possible.

The FCDO is a strong supporter of OSCE Election Observation Missions (EOMs) carried out by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) that observe elections in the OSCE region. We in turn are considered by ODIHR to be an important and credible provider of election monitors. The creation of the FCDO has also provided

an opportunity to increase coherence between election observation and longer-term development support to the inclusive electoral processes. As part of the FCDO's objectives to support and promote open societies, we will ensure future support for ODIHR's monitoring missions is underpinned by a clear analysis of where UK support can have the greatest impact.

Election observation is an integral part of democratic scrutiny and allows the UK to support democracies around the globe. As set out in the Integrated Review, the UK will promote effective and transparent governance and robust democratic institutions. We are in the early stages of exploring options for how the UK can bolster support for EOMs and strengthen existing multilateral efforts. This new elections observation capability will be in addition to our continued support for OSCE EOMs and we want to complement ongoing work by existing international election observation organisations.

We recommend strategic support of democracies and open societies through a clear election monitoring strategy put forward by the FCDO that includes:

- i) **Publishing an annual list of which ODIHR election monitoring missions it will support, with strategic considerations of which countries are chosen based on wider foreign policy objectives and streamlining the appointment of Long-Term Observers.**

We consider fully each request for participation in ODIHR missions. Decisions on countries to which the UK will send election observers are made on a case-by-case basis in response to ODIHR's Needs Assessment Missions. We also consider the resources currently available as well as the wellbeing and safety of any UK observers that may be sent to the mission. The FCDO Annual Human Rights Report provides information on UK election observations, including in the OSCE region.

In order to streamline the recruitment of election monitors, we have launched a competitive procurement process to appoint a single supplier to recruit and manage UK observers to ODIHR election observation missions. We expect the single supplier to be in place in autumn this year.

- ii) **Working with ODIHR to introduce a methodology for observation of online and media aspects of elections, and to support the resilience of democratic institutions against cyber-attacks.**

ODIHR has a highly respected and well-established methodology for election observation, which covers the media environment including broadcast, print and new media. The UK will continue to support ODIHR's methodology for observation, including online and media aspects of elections.

- iii) **Strategic support to allies in Europe play their own role in the OSCE by lending expertise or capability to another country's lead envoy.**
(Paragraph 45b)

We will work with international partners to strengthen election observation standards and consider how our new UK capability to support election observation can be leveraged to provide support and expertise to benefit other countries.

The United Nations Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC)

The Government has taken important steps in addressing some of the issues identified in these bodies but should go further if these bodies are to defend human rights in line with the Government's intentions as outlined in the Integrated Review:

- a) **In terms of strengthening the OHCHR to uphold and further the cause of rights-based development, we recommend the FCDO lead the way by using the expertise (now incorporated from DFID) to provide voluntary core funding for the organisation and should use the information to raise awareness of the need to engage with the organisation. This should focus on promoting OHCHR secretariat independence and strengthening core operations against unacceptable interference. (Paragraph 46a)**

The UK has been committed to supporting the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) since its creation in 1993. In addition to providing project funding for some of OHCHR's work on specific countries (e.g. Syria) and issues (e.g. PSVI), we have worked with OHCHR to improve its institutional capacity and utility to the wider UN system as a strong and independent advocate for human rights, and provided additional voluntary funding to support OHCHR's full range of activities. OHCHR's global capability, stature, and level of access enable it to deliver against many of our key human rights priorities in a way that is unmatched by other organisations.

In 2020, in addition to our contribution through the UN's regular budget, the UK provided voluntary funding of \$9.1m (£6.7m). \$3.6m (£2.7m) of that was un-earmarked (core) funding, with a further \$5.5m (£4.0m) earmarked to a range of specific thematic and geographic UK priorities. While we keep the balance of our funding under regular review, we also work to ensure funding for OHCHR is not reduced in the annual negotiations on the UN Programme Budget.

Renewed focus on building coalitions of like-minded states, which aim to uphold democratic and individual human rights values will be key to defending the RBIS through the Human Rights Council. We recommend that the Government:

- i) **speaks out against the election of states with a negative direction of travel with respect to their human rights record and gives a complete picture of activity at the Human Rights Council in its reporting to Parliament.**

The UK takes a proactive approach in trying to ensure that those elected to the Human Rights Council uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of Human Rights and cooperate fully with the Council. In most cases, we consider that this is best approached discreetly to avoid accusations of Western interference. This task is made difficult because of the rotational approach to elections taken in some regions and the considerable resources deployed to seek election to the HRC by some prospective members. We will endeavour to give as complete a picture as possible of the activity of the Human Rights Council.

While the membership composition may be more or less challenging from year to year, the Council remains able to reach consensus on important resolutions, such as on Myanmar or girls education, and to take strong action to combat impunity by voting through

resolutions on Syria, Iran and Belarus

- ii) **uses minilateral arrangements, to advance the case for a ‘competitive slate’ system for elections, initially amongst European and Commonwealth partners.**

The UK supports a more diverse membership of the Human Rights Council, and we encourage more likeminded states to stand, particularly where there are states with poor human rights records competing for seats. We urge candidate states to participate in public pledging events in New York and Geneva, and have encouraged smaller likeminded states to consider standing for election when they have not done so previously. At the same time, we recognise that there is a powerful dynamic underpinning the rotational systems in place for some regional groupings.

The UK recognises the value of working closely and effectively with a range of states in different groupings on issues at the Human Rights Council. The composition of the HRC’s membership can make this challenging at times. For example, we lead a cross-regional group which presents a resolution on Syria at each session of the Council. We worked with the UAE in July 2021 to secure a landmark resolution on girls’ education, and we worked with the EU to secure a Special Session of the Council following the coup in Myanmar in February 2021. At HRC 45 in September 2020, we worked with members of the Commonwealth to deliver the first ever Commonwealth Joint Statement at the Council focussed on a commitment to good governance, the rule of law, democratic principles and human rights. To support the engagement of smaller Commonwealth states at the Council, the UK has provided funding to the Commonwealth Small States Office.

- iii) **seeks the support of states who share UK values to call for more Special Sessions and motions using the Irish Principles as criteria for proposing them.** (Paragraph 46b)

The UK is one of the most active members of the Human Rights Council. We have a strong track record of leading resolutions and of calling for or supporting Special Sessions—such as on Myanmar in February 2021. When considering whether to take action at the Council we take into account of a range of factors, including those set out in the ‘Irish Principles.’ We will continue to work closely with likeminded states and consider the most appropriate way to raise current and emerging human rights situations at the Council, including Special Sessions.

The World Health Organisation (WHO)

Where there is reliable intelligence to do so, the UK Government should continue to use its voice to call out states that are not complying with, or acting in the spirit of, the International Health Regulations. (Paragraph 47i)

The International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005 with previous versions in 1969, 1973 and 1981) is a legal instrument which sets out wide-ranging rights and obligations for 196 countries (“States Parties”), including the requirement to report on public health events. Effective implementation is the responsibility of countries, supported by WHO and others to develop their own capabilities to prevent, detect and respond to events or health threats, which might lead to a public health emergency. The UK has provided ODA

funding to work in partnership with 12 countries to support the development of these capabilities through the IHR strengthening Project, and the Tackling Deadly Diseases in Africa Programme. This aspect—whether or not countries have capacities in place—is underpinned by a monitoring process based on self-assessment, using a detailed WHO tool looking across 13 elements of core public health functions. These are wide ranging, looking at for example health services, food safety, points of entry as well as radiation and chemical-related emergency risk.

Ultimately, sovereign states are responsible for assessing the urgency of events and rapidly informing WHO where these are deemed urgent. A dispute resolution mechanism exists to arbitrate on differences of opinion, though influence between Member States and external scrutiny (e.g. social media discussion of unverified data) are important incentives towards transparency. WHO Member States have now agreed to consider developing a global Pandemic Treaty, which could include mechanisms to strengthen accountability.

The UK will continue to use a number of approaches in response to concerns around reporting. This will include raising issues through formal channels, such as WHO mechanisms; diplomatic tracks, both bilaterally and jointly with other Member States; as well as raising concerns publicly where this is deemed appropriate.

The UK can be a rule setter in the WHO by leading on the revision of the International Health Regulations (IHR) in the light of lessons learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic. We recommend the Government work with groups of like-minded states, both net financial contributors and recipients, to bring forward proposals on how the IHR can be strengthened. These improvements should ensure the group has an investigatory mandate and ensure individual states cannot block the much-needed inquiries to help prevent future pandemics. (Paragraph 47ii)

The UK has always been a constructive supporter and partner of WHO, and a 'critical friend' where necessary. A process is already under way in the WHO, leading to the May 2022 World Health Assembly, for Member States to agree upon reforms in light of lessons learned from COVID-19. This will include options for strengthening the IHR and their implementation. We are engaging closely with a range of countries to bring forward proposals.

Studies following major past outbreaks and pandemics have played a critical role in lesson-learning and scientific understanding of those pathogens that represent the greatest risk. We believe that any inquiries of this nature should be fully transparent and science-led. We will work with partners to consider how WHO's mandate can be strengthened, and also how to encourage and incentivise rapid information sharing from countries. We also recognise that co-operation can be impeded where investigations are perceived as punitive. Any new mechanisms or strengthening of WHO's powers will need the backing and trust of all of its Member States to be genuinely effective.

We welcome the steps outlined by the DHSC and FCDO regarding the continued support of the WHO through voluntary earmarked funding arrangements and the 30% increase in core costs as outlined in the Integrated Review. As the second largest donor to the WHO we recommend the UK, under the leadership of the FCDO, convene a meeting of likeminded donors (including Germany and Sweden) to align priorities and release more funding for core costs. (Paragraph 47iii)

As the largest fully flexible core voluntary funding donor to WHO, (second largest sovereign donor) the UK has led by example in providing WHO with the flexibility it needs to better manage its funding in line with needs, while maintaining high performance expectations.

The UK Government has used WHO governing bodies and other Member State meetings consistently to promote the UK's approach to funding arrangements with WHO, and has convened or joined a number of funding dialogues in recent years. This includes a major event hosted by Sweden in 2019 on WHO's overall funding approach, involving many Member States and where progressive donors such as the UK and Germany set our approach; we also convened a Sweden/UK-hosted roundtable last year on flexible funding. We will continue to look for opportunities to encourage other donors to increase the overall sustainability of their funding to WHO (for example through increased flexibility; use of multi-year agreements to support WHO's internal planning). The ongoing Sustainable Financing Working Group, an Open-Ended Working Group established by the WHO Executive Board this year, is looking at these issues and the UK is playing an active role in shaping discussions.

INTERPOL

The Government appreciates the Foreign Affairs Committee's renewed interest in the UK's role in multilateral organisations, particularly INTERPOL. Scrutiny of HMG's actions in this space is vital with the increased role INTERPOL now plays in our international law enforcement co-operation. We are grateful that the report recognises the significant and sustained work the UK has done in recent years to increase our influence and support of INTERPOL.

The Government understands the concerns expressed by the Committee about previous misuse of INTERPOL capabilities by a few INTERPOL members and the serious impact this had on specific individuals. However, we believe the recommendations in this report do not reflect the extensive evidence supplied to the Committee setting out the progress INTERPOL has made in the last five years to strengthen the integrity of its systems (with the UK being a vocal supporter and advocate of this work). This is particularly notable in the recommendations on Red Notices and on the transparency of INTERPOL's organisational procedures regarding Red Notices, which have been significantly reformed in recent years. It is disappointing this progress has not been recognised in these recommendations.

INTERPOL's integral role in supporting the global law enforcement community and fostering international co-operation is of crucial importance to the UK. INTERPOL plays a vital role each day to protect the public in the UK. We hope that the responses below to the Committee's recommendations go some way to providing reassurance of the importance the UK places on our relationship with INTERPOL, and the work we do to fortify INTERPOL as an institution. The UK's commitment to strengthening INTERPOL and our support for its work has been demonstrated most recently by putting forward DCC Will Kerr from Police Scotland as a candidate for the Executive Committee.

If the Government's renewed engagement with INTERPOL is going to be successful in strengthening it against malign activity, it needs to be prepared to publicly recognise the extent to which states still attempt to abuse the system. (Paragraph 48a)

The UK maintains a strong dialogue with INTERPOL at both operational and strategic levels, and we are confident that our support and engagement is working to strengthen INTERPOL systems and support its organisational reforms, which ensure the integrity of INTERPOL's tools and systems.

The Government recognises that it is important to maintain a strong position against the abuse of any multilateral system. Should the UK have concerns regarding potential abuse of INTERPOL channels by other countries, we have routes to highlight these concerns through existing channels and will deploy these as appropriate. We are considering including a joint statement against the abuse of INTERPOL's systems in our G7 Interiors Ministers' communique.

Whilst we appreciate the operational need to keep information regarding legitimate Red Notices and Diffusions from those to whom they pertain, we see a need for greater support for those whose lives are impacted by failed attempts to use this system maliciously. We therefore recommend greater coordination between the FCDO and the Home Office on the approach to dealing with individual cases of Red Notices and Diffusions. This should include a designated team responsible for supporting those who may face consequences of attempts by states to issue abusive notices. (Paragraph 48b)

Any misuse of INTERPOL Notices is taken very seriously by the UK Government. The Home Office continues to work with INTERPOL and the National Crime Agency (NCA), which acts as the UK's National Central Bureau for INTERPOL, to support INTERPOL's efforts to ensure its systems protect individuals' human rights, and that Notices published are in accordance with Article 3 of INTERPOL's Constitution. Before issuing an INTERPOL Red Notice, Member States must ensure that the request for extradition is valid under their national systems and meet the human rights standards set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The UK can give greater scrutiny to circulations from countries of concern—and there are safeguards within our domestic system to ensure that action on a Red Notice is not taken forward if there are concerns regarding the origin or motivation behind the Notice.

Where the UK has concerns about a Red Notice request, the NCA refers them to the Commission for the Control of Files (CCF) and the Office of Legal Affairs for consideration and appropriate action. In November 2019, the UK seconded a lawyer to share UK expertise with the INTERPOL Notices and Diffusions Task Force. The Task Force was created to conduct a more robust quality and legal compliance review process for all incoming Red Notices prior to publication, and our secondees work with the Task Force to ensure any notices which are not compliant with INTERPOL's systems are dealt with appropriately and removed.

When an alert has been provisionally blocked or deleted by the INTERPOL Secretariat General (IPSG) the UK is notified, and we have established processes to remove these alerts from domestic systems.

The UK can also undertake a thorough risk assessment where a Red Notice is issued for an individual which does not meet our standards for compliance, with both INTERPOL's guidelines and our own principles and values of human rights. HMG works with our operational partners, the National Crime Agency, to ensure an appropriate response, both

proactively and reactively. This is managed on a case-by-case basis.

In the rare instance when an individual case requires specific support and attention, our established cross-Whitehall networks can ensure appropriate attention addresses any issues which have arisen. Our response includes consideration of whether any wider protections will be required in instances where a state is maliciously targeting an individual. These cases are managed through existing governance and communication channels, and are handled on a case-by-case basis.

We recommend that the Government consider a Global Crime Coordination Group involving the Home Office and FCDO, as well as other relevant Whitehall departments, to harmonise the approach toward INTERPOL reform and misuse. This should be focussed on facilitating a unified approach to the treatment of Red Notices and Diffusions by UK authorities, countering malign uses of these against UK interests, and ensuring that engagement with Russia and China at INTERPOL is consistent with wider policies toward their actions. (Paragraph 48c)

The UK's cross-Whitehall governance on all INTERPOL related issues is well established, and draws in FCDO and Home Office counterparts, law enforcement partners including police force senior chiefs, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), and the National Crime Agency (NCA) to ensure our policies are aligned on the Government's approach to INTERPOL. This forum is used to discuss INTERPOL engagement, including discussions on UK-INTERPOL strategy and any specific domestic issues with INTERPOL usage. It is worth noting that INTERPOL is first and foremost an operational and technical organisation, and much of the interaction happens at that level—on which the NCA leads.

INTERPOL elections have been a primary area of FCDO and Home Office co-ordination; the two departments worked very closely in the run up to the last INTERPOL Presidential election in 2018 and are closely co-ordinating on the upcoming Executive Committee elections, including the Presidential election.

The UK is an active participant in INTERPOL governance regarding the use of INTERPOL data, Notices and Diffusions. Regular INTERPOL working groups, attended by Member States, are held to discuss these matters. The UK is also a strong supporter of the work of the Notices and Diffusions Task Force, which focuses on scrutinising alerts for any political bias. We will look to include a broad statement of support across like-minded partners on the importance INTERPOL's organisational reform initiatives during the G7 Interior Ministers meeting in September 2021.

It is important to note that Red Notices are only a small aspect of INTERPOL's core business. The UK is engaging extensively with EU and international partners both bilaterally, and also via multilateral groups like the G7 and G6 (Europe), to expand the use of Blue and Green notifications to assist investigations and identify subjects of interest, as well as ensuring operational confidence in the treatment of these alerts. The FCDO-led project Soteria is a very good example of our ongoing work to encourage greater use of INTERPOL Green Notices in the context of preventing sexual exploitation in the humanitarian sector.

Significant and rapid steps are needed to ensure the independence of the Commission on the Control of INTERPOL's Files. The FCDO and Home Office should carry out a review of the existing structures, particularly concerning the selection criteria for

candidates of the Executive Committee and make recommendations for actions required to achieve changes that would facilitate greater independence and transparency. (Paragraph 48d)

The UK is a consistent and clear supporter of INTERPOL's work to strengthen its internal governance, including the Commission on the Control (CCF) of INTERPOL's files, an independent monitoring body responsible for ensuring that the processing of personal data conforms to INTERPOL's Constitution and rules for data processing. The CCF is assisted in its work by a Secretariat team of highly qualified legal experts and administrative staff that represent the principal legal systems of the world.

To ensure the impartiality of the CCF, in cases where there is a challenge to the legitimacy of an INTERPOL circulation, a member of the Request Chamber (the CCF body responsible for processing requests for access, correction or deletion of data processed by INTERPOL's Information System) will be automatically excluded when they are a national of the source country of the data challenged. In such cases, the CCF member will have no access to the relevant documents and will take no part in deliberations.

The members of the CCF are elected by the INTERPOL General Assembly and we work closely with partners to ensure strong and suitably qualified representatives are included, scrutinising all candidates and working together with like-minded countries to co-ordinate support for suitable individuals.

The UK is an active participant in INTERPOL's Working Group on the Rules of Data Processing and fully supports the review of INTERPOL's requirements that ensure the legality and quality of information and protection of personal data.

The UK is liaising closely with like-minded partners to make sure that members of the Executive Committee can provide an effective support and accountability role for INTERPOL, particularly in light of the upcoming round of Executive Committee elections in the 2021 General Assembly. The election of suitable candidates who have the relevant tactical and strategic expertise is a high priority for both the Home Office and FCDO.

In partnership with like-minded partners, we are seeking to support candidates for the Executive Committee, including the Presidency, who can demonstrate transparent leadership and share our views on the importance of INTERPOL's adherence to a rules-based system for international police co-operation.

We recommend the FCDO coordinate with the Home Office to work with other democratic funders of INTERPOL tabling a resolution to the General Assembly affirming the secretariat's power (under Article 131) to suspend abusive states. (Paragraph 48e)

We are closely aligned with like-minded partners in ensuring that INTERPOL as an organisation is strengthened, and that it is able to exercise its authority to protect its systems from abuse. We remain committed to ensuring INTERPOL systems and practices continue to deliver effectively for the rules-based international system, and we work directly with the organisation and international partners to support this. We continue to assess thoroughly the benefits of all channels of communication available to us, and like-minded partners, to ensure INTERPOL remains robust in responding attempts to misuse its systems.

INTERPOL has sufficient tools and measures to address concerns around the behaviour of its members, including addressing system abuses (up to and including expulsion), and we believe these are being applied appropriately. The UK remains confident that the processes in place within INTERPOL to stop the circulation of Notices and Diffusions, which do not comply with the Constitution, and the corresponding processes to resolve sustained inappropriate use of INTERPOL systems by a particular country, are fit for purpose.

We will look to re-affirm our support for INTERPOL and the integrity of its systems and capabilities with our G7 partners during the Interior Ministers meeting in September 2021

We recommend the UK Government work with other democratic funders to harmonise donor practices and enable a situation where voluntary core funding reduces the reliance on the INTERPOL Safer World Foundation. This would have the goal of promoting the financial independence of the secretariat and integrity of the organisation. Requirements for greater transparency in INTERPOL's finances should be built into these arrangements. (Paragraph 48f)

The UK is committed to ensuring INTERPOL is supported by a sustainable and independent operating budget. INTERPOL's primary source of funding is the statutory contributions paid in by all Member States. The UK is one of INTERPOL's biggest donors, in terms of statutory contributions, voluntary contributions to specific projects, and in-kind support.

We are also committed to aligning and working co-operatively with G7 partners and other like-minded Member States to ensure the funding and governance of INTERPOL is transparent and clearly documented. We will continue to work with INTERPOL to ensure that financial transparency is at the heart of INTERPOL's organisational reforms.

Through the UK's National Crime Bureau in the NCA we participate in a 'Financial Matters' working group which also provides us with some assurances on INTERPOL's budget management. In this working group, and other governance forums, the UK continues to be a strong voice supporting INTERPOL in increasing its financial transparency and providing guidance and recommendations on this matter.

The Executive Committee, alongside the Secretary General, plays a key role in regulating and providing oversight of INTERPOL's finances, as per INTERPOL's Financial Regulations structure. The UK recognises and supports the critical role of the Executive Committee to provide checks and balances in INTERPOL's structure, and continues to take steps to ensure that the Executive Committee works effectively to push forward key INTERPOL objectives, including increasing INTERPOL's financial sustainability and transparency. This includes direct UK participation in the Executive Committee elections in 2021, where we have put forward Deputy Chief Constable Will Kerr for a role on the Committee.

We recommend the Government works with 'Five Eyes' partners to actively lobby against any attempt by any other state with a poor record of use of INTERPOL's systems, to have a candidate elected to the presidency role at the next general assembly meeting. (Paragraph 48g)

The Government agrees that it is crucial that whichever candidate takes up the post of President following the elections in 2021 leads transparently and ensures INTERPOL's adherence to a rules-based system of international police co-operation, which is crucial for the credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness of the organisation. It is also important to note, however, that as set out in INTERPOL's Constitution the President's role is only to: "(a) Preside at meetings of the Assembly and the Executive Committee and direct the discussions; (b) Ensure that the activities of the Organisation are in conformity with the decisions of the General Assembly and the Executive Committee; (c) Maintain as far as is possible direct and constant contact with the Secretary General of the Organisation."

The Executive Committee's role is critical in ensuring there are checks and balances within INTERPOL's leadership. We are liaising closely with like-minded partners to support candidates for the next round of Executive Committee elections. This includes putting forward a UK candidate, Deputy Chief Constable Will Kerr, for the Executive Committee elections in 2021.

The Government recognises the importance of the leadership of the organisation. The UK will consider the merits of candidates and assess each on a case-by-case basis. The Home Office and the FCDO is in constant dialogue with like-minded partners to align ourselves for the next round of elections at the INTERPOL General Assembly, including in our stance on the Presidential elections.

A number of UK officers are directly seconded into INTERPOL, including Stephen Kavanagh as Executive Director of Policing Services, the most senior operational role in the organisation. Mr Kavanagh has oversight over INTERPOL's operational objectives in areas including cybercrime, counter terrorism, analysis and global outreach and regional support and organised and emerging crime.

We are committed to continuing our efforts to ensure all INTERPOL's senior officials maintain the confidence of national law enforcement and wider society in INTERPOL.

We recommend the Government works with 'Five Eyes' partners to track and expose malicious, vexatious, and politically motivated use of Red Notices by member states.
(Paragraph 48h)

Article 3 of INTERPOL's Constitution explicitly states that "the Organisation is strictly forbidden to undertake any intervention or activities of political, military, religious or racial character" and the Home Office supports INTERPOL's efforts to observe this edict.

The UK has a regular dialogue with Five Eyes partners, which covers our collective engagement with INTERPOL, and where necessary this includes discussions regarding potential misuse of INTERPOL Red Notices by Member States, and the actions we can take in support of INTERPOL to combat these. Our Five Eyes engagement is in addition to the extensive work the UK does to support INTERPOL's independent monitoring bodies.

INTERPOL has an independent monitoring body, the Commission for the Control of INTERPOL's Files (CCF) that oversees INTERPOL's activities as well as a dedicated multidisciplinary Notices and Diffusions Taskforce. The CCF is responsible for ensuring that the processing of personal data on INTERPOL systems conforms to the Constitution and rules for data processing. The CCF processes requests from individuals for access to, and removal of, data held on them and resolves disputes as to the legitimacy of Notices.

The implementation of the Notices and Diffusions Taskforce was also part of a range of reforms that INTERPOL introduced in 2016 to bolster the integrity and prevent abuse of its systems. In November 2019, the UK seconded a senior lawyer to INTERPOL to further increase our support to the work of the Taskforce in preventing abuse of INTERPOL systems, and our support for INTERPOL's independence and integrity.

The UK also co-operates with member countries via INTERPOL governance groups, as well as through bilateral engagement, to ensure INTERPOL is well governed and delivers its core mission to support international law enforcement co-operation through rules and rights-based security cooperation.

The UK strongly supports the measures the organisation has undertaken to strengthen its review mechanisms, and continues to co-ordinate support for these, including through our leading roles in the G6 (Europe) and G7. We are committed to working with INTERPOL, and with like-minded partners, to continue to strengthen INTERPOL's own systems for tracking and taking action against wrongfully submitted Notices and Diffusions.

It is the UK's position that working to reinforce INTERPOL's independent monitoring bodies, like the Notices and Diffusions Task Force, is a more sustainable and effective way to ensure INTERPOL's systems are not abused by Member States. We do however maintain strong diplomatic and tactical communications with Five Eyes countries where we can collaborate to bring issues to INTERPOL's attention. We will continue to utilise these fora to further our collective commitment to strengthening INTERPOL.

World Trade Organisation (WTO)

The best way to strengthen the WTO is to use it. The most viable way of using the WTO at the current time is through issue-based plurilateral trade agreements, which have the potential for scaling up and setting new rules and norms; minilateral discussions about new rules to address challenges posed by harmful Chinese trade practices; and engaging with the US Administration over their reservations about the Appellate Body:

We recommend the UK Government leads engagement with the US Administration in discussions aimed at resolving US issues with the Appellate Body, ultimately concluding with an appointment of a US judge.

The UK continues to engage with the US and the wider WTO membership on the challenges facing the WTO dispute settlement system in an effort to find a way forward that is acceptable to all members. The UK is committed to enforceable, binding and impartial dispute settlement. We do, however, share some of the concerns about the current system, and we recognise the need for ambitious, enduring reform.

The UK has consistently called for appointments to the Appellate Body to resume in order to ensure that all Members can full access their rights under the Dispute Settlement Understanding. We remain focussed on gathering support for reform discussions. We believe that certain substantive (rulebook) issues must be addressed to ensure that a reformed system functions effectively.

We recommend the FCDO plays a key role, in conjunction with other relevant departments, to apply its diplomatic resources in promoting issue-based plurilateral

agreements within the WTO framework amongst willing states.

We agree that plurilateral negotiations at the WTO remain a vital tool for making progress on 21st Century issues and advancing new trade rules. The UK remains actively engaged in all ongoing plurilateral Joint Statement Initiatives at the WTO. They are open to all WTO members and we encourage all members, in particular Developing Countries, to join these negotiations.

Working closely with DIT and other relevant departments across Whitehall, we continue to use the diplomatic network to drive strong results in these negotiations and explore opportunities for launching new plurilateral initiatives as we approach the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (November 2021).

Making progress on the E-Commerce Joint Initiative, one of the ongoing plurilateral negotiations at the WTO, is particularly important for the UK. We have heavily invested in this work since its inception and are an active participant in the negotiations making text proposals, facilitating small group discussions and advocating for participation by as many WTO members as possible.

The UK should work to build within the WTO a grouping of states that apply the rule of law and principles of fair competition to support each other as issues are raised. This group would work toward addressing the challenges posed by the Chinese economic model within the WTO rules. We recommend that the Government's approach to this considers how to formulate and introduce new trading rules that uphold minimum standards and behaviours that will require evolution of economic practices in China through dispute rulings. It should be an objective of this group to remove China's classification as a developing country. (Paragraph 49)

The UK is firmly committed to the rules-based multilateral trading system and the importance of fair competition in global trade. We agree that WTO rules need to be strengthened and updated in order to tackle market-distorting trading practices, such as harmful industrial subsidies. We also recognise the need for reform of the current system of awarding Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) through self-designation of developing country status. SDT is an important tool to support countries with genuine need, particularly Least Developed Countries, to integrate into the multilateral trading system and to implement WTO agreements. However, it is not right that some of the biggest players in sectors, as well as States that are clearly not developing countries, have access to these provisions. With the G7, we have called on advanced WTO Members claiming developing country status to undertake full commitments in ongoing and future WTO negotiations.

With G7 partners, we have urged China to assume and fulfil obligations and responsibilities commensurate with its global economic role. We continue to engage with the wider WTO membership through a range of channels on market-distorting trading practices and SDT. We have placed WTO reform at the centre of this year's G7 Trade Track discussions, where we are seeking to build momentum and common ground ahead of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference in November 2021.

International Criminal Court (ICC)

The Government should use the UK's voice at the UN and Assembly of State Parties to call out states who are non-compliant with Court orders; and to push for greater financial support of the ICC by the UN when investigating cases mandated by the UNSC. (Paragraph 50a)

Article 88 of the Rome Statute requires that each State Party have procedures available under their national law for co-operation with the ICC, as well as existing procedures to deal with non-compliance by a State Party. When a State Party has not complied with its obligations to co-operate with the Court, this is assessed by the Pre-Trial Chamber, and that State Party can be referred to the UNSC and the Assembly of States Parties (ASP). However, to date, these bodies have not acted on the issue of non-compliance. At the UN Security Council meeting on Libya in May 2021, the UK reiterated our call for all relevant states, including States Parties to the Rome Statute and non-states parties, to cooperate with the ICC in the arrest and surrender of warranted individuals.

The UK has also publicly encouraged and expressed support for States who have cooperated with ICC rulings and orders. This included public support at the Security Council Briefing on the ICC in June 2021, for the constructive and sustained dialogue between the ICC and the Government of Sudan, including the facilitation of evidence gathering and access to witnesses. We will continue to hold bilateral discussions with States Parties, and issue statements, where it is appropriate and effective to do so.

We support the recommendation to push for greater financial support of the ICC by the UN when investigating cases mandated by the UNSC. Under Article 116 of the Rome Statute, voluntary contributions may be received by the Court “from Governments, international organisations, individuals, corporations and other entities”, in accordance with relevant criteria adopted by the Assembly of States Parties.

The UK's financial approach to the ICC should be based on the assessed needs of the Court. There should also be a scholarship programme for candidates from Commonwealth countries to undertake internships at the ICC. (Paragraph 50b)

Positive reform of the ICC is a priority for the UK. We agree that the UK's financial approach to the ICC should be based on the assessed needs of the Court taking into account its projected caseload and the implementation of reforms agreed by States Parties. The ICC budget is set annually and States Parties pay an assessed contribution based on, but not the same as, the UN Scale of Assessment. The budget is negotiated annually and at the 2020 Assembly of States Parties, the UK worked with other States to ensure value for money.

Following the recommendations of the Independent Experts Review (IER), the UK is focused on streamlining the budget process and adopting an approach that accurately forecasts the needs for the upcoming year. The IER also makes recommendations on matters relating to human resources and recruitment to the Court, including Recommendation 96, which stipulates “the fund for paid internships and visiting scholar positions should be enlarged, to enable candidates from developing nations to take up such positions in the Court.” We are also supportive of mechanisms to propose and approve savings and efficiencies in the budget.

The UK supports the recommendations to reform the recruitment process at the ICC, but a proposal for a further significant budget expansion that centres on a Commonwealth-focused scholarship would need careful consideration.

In the process of aligning aid with strategic priorities, we recommend the FCDO work with groups of like-minded Development Assistance Committee (DAC) states to provide incentives for ratifying states parties (who are recipients of development assistance) to comply with ICC rulings and orders. (Paragraph 50c)

We appreciate the rationale of encouraging others to comply with ICC rulings. The November 2020 High Level Meeting confirmed DAC member commitment to use development co-operation to support democracy, the rule of law and human rights, including freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and association, as essential elements of sustainable development for any society.

However, we do not believe it is appropriate to incentivise States Parties to comply with ICC rulings and orders via development assistance. Although FCDO attaches terms and conditions to all the aid it provides to promote and underline UK values (e.g. encourage governments to deliver reforms or put in place appropriate financial and fiduciary safeguards) the FCDO does not attach conditions to its aid that seek wider policy or reform objectives not linked to the purpose of the funding in question.

Evidence shows that this type of conditionality does not work: aid, or threats to withdraw it, can rarely be used to 'buy' short-term foreign policy gains. UK conditionality policy was set out in the UK Policy Paper: 'Partnerships for Poverty Reduction: Rethinking Conditionality'. The policy remains in force for all bilateral UK aid partnerships. Our assessment of a government's commitment to the partnership principles is used to inform and shape our overall strategy for engagement in all countries with which we have an aid partnership.

We will continue to encourage states to comply with ICC rulings and orders, where it is appropriate and effective for us to do so.

The External Audit System of the UN

We recommend the Government calls for a technical competency led external audit selection process in UN bodies, and a combined assurance process to streamline financial and performance audits. (Paragraph 51)

The UN and its Agencies, Funds and Programmes have both internal and external audit functions to ensure that there is adequate oversight of their operations and to enhance accountability, transparency and governance.

We agree that the selection of external auditors for UN organisations should be based on competency led technical assessments of the bids using clear and transparent criteria. We will continue to press for bids to be assessed on the relative merits of the offers made by each bidder and the capacity of the audit offices to deliver them.

We will continue to engage on internal audits, and with the UN oversight bodies and their reports, encouraging organisations to implement the bodies' recommendations and to improve coordination between the oversight bodies and on their programmes of

work. We will also continue to engage with the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC), which focuses on improving the quality of audit across the UN system, including streamlining financial and performance audits.

Wider Conclusions

The need to play an active and leading role internationally, in setting high standards and holding others to account. (Paragraph 55 1)

The UK is an influential and leading voice in most multilateral organisations. Our significant financial contributions (both assessed membership subscriptions and additional voluntary contributions), our diplomatic engagement and our thought leadership mean we play a significant and influential role across the international system. We are well-respected for our expertise and our commitment to the principle of multilateralism. But the world is changing and while we need to uphold and defend the system, we also need to modernise and strengthen it. Now more than ever we need to recognise the importance of collective action to tackle global challenges. We need to continue to work with allies in calling out the destructive or negative agendas of our global rivals and competitors.

The need for a coordinated UK Government approach. This includes better coordination between government departments, between delegations in Geneva and New York, and the use of funding as a means for strengthening multilateral organisations. (Paragraph 55 2)

The FCDO and our network of multilateral and bilateral posts work closely with other government departments across the international agenda. For instance, we work with DHSC on Health and the COVID-19 pandemic, MOD on NATO, and DIT on the WTO. All of our delegations and missions overseas are led by a Permanent Representative who is the representative of HMG, supported by colleagues from across government. Delegations to different organisations use the FCDO platform, so there is a One HMG approach at post, with colleagues from across Whitehall working side by side

The desirability of developing and enabling broad groups of like-minded states, wherever possible within multilateral organisations, to address specific challenges or policy issues. (Paragraph 55 3)

Alongside our like-minded allies and partners, we will be guided by the principles of multilateralism and defend them. However, we will also collaborate with partners to adapt and reform the international system in order to respond to existing and new global threats and challenges: including through pursuing a more inclusive multilateralism that partners with civil society and private sector actors; to build back better from the health and economic crises caused by the global pandemic; and shape an international system fit for purpose to tackle the challenges of the 21st century.