

THE UK AND THE UN: PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Government welcomes the inquiry by the Select Committee on International Relations into the UK's approach to the UN and the priorities for the new Secretary-General, and its report published on 3 November 2016.

This paper sets out our response to the Committee's conclusions and recommendations. The Committee's text is in bold and the Government's response is in plain text. Paragraph numbers refer to the Committee's report. The Committee should note that combined answers have been given for recommendations 10 and 11; 17 and 18; 30, 31 and 32; 33, 34 and 35; 42 and 43; 44 and 45; and 49 and 50.

THE UNITED NATIONS IN A NEW CONTEXT

1. This report is based on our firm conviction that the UN remains more than ever an essential global institution and a lynchpin of a rules-based international order. The UN possesses unique legitimacy as a place to mediate between states. When the interests of the permanent five members align, the Security Council plays an indispensable role in promoting peace and security and preventing war. The nuclear deal with Iran is one such recent example. (Paragraph 23)

The Government agrees. The UN is a vital institution to enable the peaceful resolution of disputes, the preservation of the rules-based international order, the protection of human rights and the promotion of sustainable development. The Security Council, the General Assembly and the other bodies of the organisation each play important roles. The Government will remain actively engaged in the full range of UN activity and promote reforms to strengthen the UN's ability to meet future challenges.

2. There is also a particular legitimacy that the UN bestows when it speaks to an issue of global concern; the recent multilateral deals on development and climate change have demonstrated the convening power of the institution. (Paragraph 24)

The Government agrees that the convening power of the UN can generate vital momentum to enable progress on issues of global concern. We pay tribute to Ban Ki-moon whose leadership as Secretary-General helped generate such momentum to positive effect on development and climate change. The UN General Assembly Resolution adopted in September 2016 on tackling the growing problem of Anti-Microbial Resistance was another good example of the organisation's convening power and of UK leadership in the UN. We will now support the new Secretary-General, António Guterres, as he seeks to build on these successes in the period ahead.

3. The UN, has however, been buffeted by systemic geopolitical shifts. Fractures between states must not mean that the UN is allowed to drift into irrelevance. (Paragraph 25)

The Government agrees that changes in geopolitics and other global trends present new challenges for the UN. We will work with other states through the UN system to ensure its continued relevance.

4. Making the UN relevant and fit for the future will be a critical task of the new Secretary-General. He will need to build political support amongst the member states, change the institutional culture and steer radical reforms through the Organisation. We do not underestimate the scale of the task, nor the shared responsibility of the member states. (Paragraph 26)

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The Government agrees that the arrival of a new Secretary-General presents an opportunity for further reform of UN structures, processes and delivery to address modern challenges more effectively. The UK will continue to play a leading role in this regard, promoting reform across the three pillars of the UN's work, including better co-ordination and accountability on Government priorities such as strengthening UN peacekeeping, preventing sexual violence in conflict, and promoting the economic rights of women and girls.

SECRETARY OR GENERAL?

5. The Government is to be congratulated for its support for a more transparent and inclusive appointment process for the new Secretary-General. The innovations should become permanent. (Paragraph 33)

The UK was fully engaged in the process of securing the best UN Secretary-General. We led an initiative to reform the selection process. This was focused on greater transparency, a more public and structured decision-making timetable, and greater gender diversity. The General Assembly candidate hearings were unprecedented and mandated through General Assembly Resolutions, enabling candidates to set out their visions to the whole UN membership. Civil society played an important role, notably the 1 for 7 Billion campaign led by UNA-UK and others. We hope that this process will set a template for the future.

6. We recommend that the UK should initiate a process to critically examine the selection process for future UN Secretaries-General, addressing further possible improvements. Discussions could focus on producing explicit criteria and qualifications for the role and consideration of the merits of a single seven year term. (Paragraph 34)

The Government notes the Committee's recommendation. Whilst the suggestion of a single seven-year term has been circulating for many years, the UN membership, as a whole, wishes to retain the existing convention of a renewable five-year term. The Government believes that there is continued merit in a system whereby a Secretary-General seeks re-selection after five years; not only does this increase their accountability, it also allows strongly-performing Secretaries-General to be given an additional mandate, and would allow any less strongly performing Secretary-General not to be renewed.

7. The informal practice of regional rotation is a limiting convention. We welcome that the appointment of António Guterres has not been hindered by that consideration. (Paragraph 35)

The Government agrees with the Committee. We do not subscribe to the principle of regional rotations. We would always prefer the best person for the role, regardless of nationality.

8. The incoming Secretary-General will take up his tenure during a period of strained relations between the permanent members of the Security Council. Perceptions of a Security Council impasse are profoundly undermining the legitimacy of the UN. The new Secretary-General will need to work to diminish tensions between the Security Council members, in particular reducing no-go areas and use of vetoes. (Paragraph 47)

The divisions within the Security Council exposed by the Syria conflict have prevented action by the international community to reduce the humanitarian impact of the fighting and to find a political solution. The Secretary-General has an essential role in navigating such differences to deliver on the UN's mandate, whilst representing both the full membership and the ideals of the organisation. We will support the new Secretary General in this task. The UK is clear

that the Security Council has a responsibility to bring to an end the type of mass atrocities and crimes against humanity that we have seen in Syria, and we will continue to work in the Security Council to that end.

9. While the UN already has structures in place to engage with formal regional organisations, the new Secretary-General should begin a process to agree, alongside member states, a strategic approach to build strong ties and coalitions with new inter-regional and local organisations. (Paragraph 48)

The Government recognises the value of strong relationships with intra-regional and local organisations. We have seen the benefits, for example, of close co-operation between the UN and the African Union in Somalia, which the UK has strongly advocated and supported. Looking ahead, we hope that this type of co-operation with regional organisations will develop, with the aim of finding solutions to regional conflicts and challenges.

10. A core priority for the new Secretary-General will be to develop a communication strategy, to engage extensively with civil society organisations and young people. The UK should support a review of the current communication strategy ensuring that it is sufficiently sensitive to new media and online platforms as well as judging its penetration to more disenfranchised communities and smaller organisations. (Paragraph 49)

11. A distinct communication strategy focused entirely on young people is particularly important. The new Secretary-General should review how the UN engages with young people, going beyond explaining the work of the UN to building mechanisms to regularly consult them on the work of the UN. (Paragraph 50)

We understand that the new Secretary-General is keen to review and refresh the UN's communications. The vision statements set out by António Guterres and other candidates to be the next Secretary-General during their public hearings were a positive start to what we hope will be a new phase in communications engagement, including with young people. The Government has taken similar steps, including increased use of social media in our diplomacy and broader international work.

AN INSTITUTION FIT FOR PURPOSE?

12. The Secretary-General has the scope to rationalise the UN Secretariat. We urge him to review its functioning, in order to promote a lean and efficient organisation. In particular, he must seek to build more coherence between its various departments and offices. (Paragraph 64)

The Government agrees with the Committee that the Secretary-General can play a critical role in driving change in the structures of the Secretariat to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. The new Secretary-General has a real opportunity to establish a new management culture; strengthen performance management; optimise transparency and value for money; and improve accountability on areas such as gender.

13. Within the Secretary-General's first term, a range of leaderships in the UN Secretariat and UN agencies will come up for selection. This is an opportunity for the UN to build on the momentum of the Secretary-General's appointment to inject more transparency and accountability into the UN system of appointments. Strengthening the quality of leadership within will, we judge, improve the functioning and credibility of the Organisation. (Paragraph 65)

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The Government agrees that good leadership is critical. The UK is active within the governing bodies of the Funds and Programmes such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and of the Specialised Agencies, such as the World Health Organisation, including setting out what we expect these organisations to deliver and holding their leaders to account. To achieve impact, we work closely with like-minded countries including a coalition of 17 major funders of the UN known as the Geneva Group. The Geneva Group meets regularly in various formations, identifying major leadership challenges across the UN system and using our collective weight to build pressure for reform.

The Government is committed to finding strong candidates for all leadership roles in the UN system, and we particularly welcome the new Secretary-General's target of gender parity in senior appointments.

14. We urge the UK to propose a more rigorous and competitive selection process for the leadership positions of UN agencies. Member states, including the UK, should agree the criteria, seek expressions of interest, put forward more than one candidate and finally, set performance expectations. (Paragraph 66)

The Government supports more rigorous and competitive selection processes, including selecting from a field of candidates for each role. Senior leaders across the UN system are recruited in different ways. Within the UN Secretariat, the UN Secretary-General has the authority to recruit his senior leadership team, including Under Secretaries-General for Political Affairs, Peacekeeping and so forth. Across the wider UN system of Funds, Programmes and Specialised Agencies, the power to appoint leaders sits more with Member States represented on the relevant executive boards. To promote high-quality candidates for the next Director-General of the World Health Organisation, the Government worked with a number of other countries to publish an article in The Lancet magazine highlighting the importance of the role and the qualities we expected candidates to demonstrate. Such initiatives can help to drive up leadership standards.

Good leadership is important not only in headquarters but also at field level. Over the years we have seen how Special Representatives of the Secretary-General can play a powerful role in pulling together the UN's efforts in conflict zones such as Iraq. Names that spring to mind include the late Sergio Vieira de Mello, as well as British nationals such as Ian Martin (East Timor, Nepal, Libya) and Nick Kay (Somalia). There is scope for capturing lessons learned from the best of these leaders and providing better support to newly appointed Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs).

15. In order to strengthen accountability, we recommend that the Secretary-General should institute a mechanism whereby the top tier of senior leaders are annually appraised. (Paragraph 67)

The Government agrees with this recommendation.

16. The UK should support a review of the current systems of oversight. The Secretary-General must be allowed more autonomy to administer the organisation, which includes managing the budget, and then be held accountable. (Paragraph 68)

The Government agrees that the Secretary-General and other UN leaders should have sufficient autonomy to manage the organisation and its budget, whilst being accountable to Member States. Transparency within the UN and its bodies is also required to permit sufficient intergovernmental oversight without paralysing decision-making. This goes beyond transparency of budgets to include transparent reporting on targets for cross-cutting areas, such as human rights.

17. The Secretary-General will not be able to force member states to do the right thing but he can use the Article 99 powers invested in his role by the Charter to elevate issues of peace and security to the attention of the Security Council, compelling their attention and insisting that the Security Council continues to engage. This will assist the process of encouraging member states to resolve their disputes through UN processes and within legal channels. (Paragraph 86)

18. The public platform of the role should be used to make breaches of international law, or the neglect of humanitarian duties, manifestly evident. (Paragraph 87)

We support the Committee's recommendation that the Secretary-General makes use of his power under Article 99 of the UN Charter to present issues to the Security Council. The UK raised this point regularly during the General Assembly hearings with candidates seeking the position of Secretary-General, asking them how they would approach this. We continue to support wider efforts to enhance Security Council early warning and situational awareness, for example in the recent debate on the worrying situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING

19. The UN needs to invest more in conflict prevention. Member states should consider awarding more financial resources, intelligence and analytical capacity to support the 'good offices' of the Secretary-General. The UK should take the lead in this field. (Paragraph 91)

The Government fully supports strengthening the UN's capacity for conflict prevention, including through enhanced early warning. We also welcome the new Secretary-General's strong emphasis on prevention. But we are not convinced that spending more is the only way to achieve this. It is important that any increase in funding leads to improved delivery, and avoids duplication and additional bureaucracy. The UK will therefore continue to advocate reforms within the UN system and in the wider NGO community, and also with the international financial institutions, to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

20. The Secretary-General must exercise his Article 99 Charter powers. In the case of Syria, the Secretary-General should raise their obligations under the Responsibility to Protect doctrine with the Security Council. There may be a political deadlock, but there is an urgent and internationally agreed humanitarian duty. (Paragraph 92)

The Government is a long-standing supporter of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). R2P is only one tool in conflict management and should be deployed to complement other tools that the Security Council and the UN system have at their disposal. The responsibility for authorising the use of coercive measures rests with the UN Security Council. We have supported a range of efforts through the Security Council to do more to address the situation in Syria.

On 19 December 2016 the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution (UNSCR) 2328, requesting that the UN carry out monitoring and observation of evacuations from parts of eastern Aleppo; ensuring that further UN staff can be deployed for this task, and demanding that the UN monitors have immediate and unimpeded access. Following the adoption of the UNSCR, implementation of its provisions will now be critical. The UK will work to ensure that the resolution is fully implemented and that the UN has full access to the areas concerned.

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The Government has a long-standing commitment to accountability and this will not change. The UK continues to believe that those responsible for war crimes must be held accountable, that any process of justice must primarily benefit Syrians and Syria as a country, and that the exact nature of the process is for Syrians to agree.

The Government fully supports the work of the independent UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria and we have stressed our support for their work in recent discussions with partners, including at recent sessions of the UN Human Rights Council. In order to support the delivery of justice in the future, we have also worked with partners on the compilation of case files of evidence of atrocities approximating to ICC standards.

21. As part of an enhanced policy of conflict prevention and increased use of his Article 99 powers, the incoming Secretary-General should undertake a review of the principal focus and implementation of the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect, which goes beyond military intervention to encompass the obligations of states to protect people from genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, with a view to making it more effective in this field. (Paragraph 93)

The Government would welcome further work to promote the Responsibility to Protect, including practical implementation where this complements the UN's other tools. It is important that, in the first instance, we support states to meet their commitment to protect their own populations. We would support a renewed focus by the incoming Secretary-General. The UN produces annual reports on the implementation of R2P.

22. We urge the Secretary-General to develop a more rigorous appointment process for senior leadership positions in UN peacekeeping, which are within his purview. An advisory panel could be instituted, comprised of former force commanders and special representatives, who would filter nominations and offer a shortlist to the Secretary-General. (Paragraph 111)

The Government agrees that the UN should refine its appointments process for senior leadership positions in peacekeeping operations to make it more gender-balanced, efficient, merit-based and better able to recognise and promote talent. However, this would only address part of the problem. The talent pool from which senior leaders are recruited is too small and there are too few women in senior peacekeeping positions. The key challenge is therefore to ensure that member states, and the UN, generate candidates with relevant experience and qualities. We will encourage the UN and our bilateral partners to think more creatively about how they can do this. We are also supporting more mentoring and better training for senior leaders.

23. The UK should support a new Secretary-General in a policy of rationalisation of UN peacekeeping missions, including the possible abolition of those missions that are no longer required or not performing. This could initiate a more strategic approach to peacekeeping missions, considering when they should be deployed. (Paragraph 112)

The Government fully agrees that peacekeeping operations should receive levels of resource appropriate for mandate delivery and prevailing political and security conditions on the ground. We have consistently supported periodic strategic reviews of missions' mandates and resources, and pushed in UN Security Council negotiations for missions that have achieved their aims to draw down and exit without delay. Where missions are failing but their work remains vital, we have advocated for the mandate to be reviewed to ensure it is appropriate and for the mission to be supported or reformed to fulfil that mandate. The Government also firmly believes in a strategic approach to peacekeeping missions and is therefore following up on the reform agenda set out at the UN Peacekeeping Defence

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Ministerial hosted by the Secretary of State for Defence in September 2016, with the objective of raising performance standards across the board. We will seek to continue this approach in partnership with the new Secretary-General.

24. Pre-deployment training is critical. It has the capacity to improve the functioning of UN operations and act as a preventative measure against misconduct. The UK is a leading proponent of this policy. We urge the Government to lead a process to consider how pre-deployment training could become mandatory and financially sustainable. Many troop contributing countries are financially constrained, therefore, countries like the UK should consider undertaking more specialist training for UN deployments. (Paragraph 113)

The Government agrees with the Committee's view that pre-deployment training is critical. Some aspects of pre-deployment training are already mandatory. The challenge is to ensure the completeness of the training regime and to put in place accountability to verify that the training is taking place. We are asking the UN to develop a single document that provides a comprehensive list of the minimum requirements for all pre-deployment training that are set out in various guidance materials. This includes the Core pre-Deployment Training Material and modules on Gender, Conflict Related Sexual Violence, Child Protection, the Protection of Civilians, and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, with clear standards and a means of self-certification.

It is primarily the responsibility of troop contributing countries to finance training, but there is a role for external partners to support this with capacity building and other assistance including through the UN. The UK provides pre-deployment training for troops sent to several UN and African Union missions, and funds a 'train the trainers' centre for peacekeepers in Uganda.

25. UN peacekeeping operations need more specialised equipment, including helicopters and non-kinetic drones for example. This is also a critical element of pledges by member states. The UK should consider how it can add value to the range of capabilities available to UN peacekeeping. (Paragraph 114)

The Government agrees it is essential that UN peacekeeping missions are appropriately equipped. We will follow up the UK-hosted UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial by encouraging member states to meet their pledges, particularly in the niche capabilities that peacekeeping operations need most. We will also work with our partners to seek agreement in the UN General Assembly to new ways to incentivise the provision and use of critical, high-quality capabilities by troop and police contributing countries. Last year's National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review (NSS/SDSR) recognised that peacekeeping is one of the UN's most important roles, and undertook to champion reform to increase the efficiency and impact of UN engagement. It also committed to doubling the number of military personnel that the UK contributes to UN peacekeeping operations. The purpose of our current deployment is to provide engineering, medical and logistical expertise.

26. Tackling sexual abuse and exploitation by UN peacekeepers must be a priority for the incoming Secretary-General. Holding peacekeepers accountable is not always a matter of political reluctance but can also be hindered by a lack of capacity within troop contributing countries or peace operations working within fragile contexts. (Paragraph 125)

The Government supports the previous UN Secretary-General's efforts to enforce a zero tolerance policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, including UNSCR 2272 which allows the Secretary-General to replace contingents from countries that fail to hold to account those

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guilty of such offences. We want the UN to reform the system to improve prevention, protection and response measures. This is why we have provided the UN with £1 million of extra-budgetary funding to support training, vetting and accountability. We hope the new UNSG will continue his predecessor's efforts to enforce zero tolerance.

27. There are complex challenges surrounding the creation of an international instrument to hold UN peacekeepers criminally accountable. Nevertheless, the Secretary-General should convene a group of experts to consider the feasibility of an international instrument to hold peacekeepers accountable for sexual abuse and suggest the best way to proceed. We urge the Government to support this process. (Paragraph 126)

The Government will continue to push for timely and thorough investigations of all allegations. However, the primary responsibility for dealing with such cases lies with the troop contributing countries and we remain to be convinced about the added value of a new international instrument. We believe we should continue to push for progress on improving the suitability of those deployed, design a reporting system that communities will trust, and ensure a stronger UN response to proven allegations. This includes better training of peacekeepers including mandatory training before deployment as well as upon arriving at mission.

28. Increasing gender parity is at the heart of Security Council Resolution 1325. The UK and incoming Secretary-General must actively promote the integration of women into the full spectrum of UN peacekeeping, including into leadership roles, peace negotiations and mediation processes and especially within specially created sexual exploitation and abuse oversight units. (Paragraph 127)

The Government is working hard to promote the integration of women into the full spectrum of UN peacekeeping, as demonstrated at the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial. Women, Peace and Security (WPS) was a core theme. The resultant communiqué, signed by 63 nations including the UK, recognised 'the indispensable role of women in UN peacekeeping, and in conflict resolution as a whole' and underscored that women's 'participation at all levels is key to the operational effectiveness of missions as well as to the success and sustainability of peace processes.' It urged the Secretary-General to prioritise the appointment of more women in senior UN leadership positions and set targets to double the number of women in military and police contingents of UN peacekeeping by 2020, as well as fill 15% of UN Staff Officer and Military Observer roles with women by December 2017.

The Government is keen to work with the new Secretary-General to support him in meeting his target of gender parity in senior appointments. Through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund we are funding the Gender Teams in both the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs to improve gender mainstreaming within both peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We also support the development and delivery of training for senior leaders to enhance their understanding of, and accountability for, WPS within their missions.

HUMAN MOBILITY: A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

29. The New York Declaration gives the UN and the Secretary-General an explicit mandate to address the issue of refugees and economic migrants. This is an area where the convening power of the Secretary-General can be put to good effect. The Declaration offers the UN a two year window to review current international policies on refugees and economic migrants. (Paragraph 148)

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The New York Declaration, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 19 September 2016 at the High Level Event on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, set out a process of consultations and negotiations on two Compacts, for adoption in 2018: on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and on Refugees. For the Refugee Compact, the focus is on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which was annexed to the New York Declaration. The CRRF outlines elements of a policy framework for countries of origin, transit and destination, donor countries, international financial institutions and aid agencies to apply in their approach to refugees. The CRRF will be piloted in several countries and will inform a final Global Compact for Refugees to be agreed in 2018. UNHCR will lead the work on the Global Compact for Refugees and the CRRF. The Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration will be co-facilitated by two UN Member States, supported by the UN Secretariat and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). The Declaration also outlined strong commitments on gender-responsive action. These include consideration of the different needs of girls, boys, men and women and a commitment to ensure women's full equal and meaningful participation in the development of local solutions and opportunities. The Government agrees that this is an area where the UN can make a difference. We are committed to continuing our support to the Secretary-General, the UN and other organisations in this work, through channels of diplomacy and by making a difference on the ground through humanitarian and developmental support.

30. The Refugee Convention should not be reopened, risking a dilution of its protections. The scale of the challenge, however, means that the definitions within the Convention and its application must be reviewed. (Paragraph 149)

31. The UN must maintain a clear differentiation between refugees and economic migrants, distinguishing between the phenomena, their causes and the response by states. (Paragraph 150)

32. The factors, however, driving the movement of people have become more complex and the current international definitions no longer accurately represent the blurred reality between refugees, economic migrants and people forcibly displaced for economic or other reasons. As part of its review of international policies, the UN should reconsider the definitions of an economic migrant and a refugee. It must also consider what additional protections might be required to strengthen the international response to people displaced by the consequences of disasters and climate change. (Paragraph 151)

At the UNGA High Level Event on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, the Prime Minister set out three guiding principles to improve the management of large movements of refugees and migrants: refugees should claim asylum in the "first safe country" they reach; states should exercise their right to protect their borders and commit to taking back their nationals; and there should be a clear distinction between refugees and economic migrants. We agree that the latter is not about re-opening the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Refugee Convention) or reconsidering the definitions of refugees and economic migrants. It is about strengthening international adherence to legal frameworks that distinguish between those groups, to ensure we provide proper gender-responsive protection for refugees. We also want to allow global economies to reap the benefits that controlled migration can bring, while providing protections for the most vulnerable migrants, including victims of human trafficking. We will take this forward in our engagement with the UN (and other) agencies.

33. The absence of any international agreement on the long-term policy on the resettlement of refugees and management of the movements of economic migrants, and the lack of a global framework for equitable burden sharing amongst states, is

destabilising and puts an unfair burden on the developing world, in particular countries in the Middle East. (Paragraph 152)

34. Therefore, the second strand of work on the UN's agenda must be on the practical questions of how states meet their commitments, how the responsibilities of the international community can be equitably shared and how civil society organisations can be more effectively engaged into a comprehensive global plan for refugees and economic migrants. (Paragraph 153)

35. A critical role for the Secretary-General will be to raise political and public attention to these issues, embedding the process within the UN, and securing the support of the member states. (Paragraph 154)

The Government has led the way in developing and building consensus for a new approach to protracted crises, including long term displacement of large numbers of people. We pioneered this approach at the London 'Supporting Syria and the Region' Conference in February 2016 – going beyond people's basic needs and investing in education, jobs and livelihoods for refugees and their host communities. The Syria Conference, which the UK co-hosted with the UN and other partners, generated pledges of over \$12bn, the largest amount ever raised in one day in response to a humanitarian disaster. Building on this approach, at the US Leaders' Summit on Refugees in September 2016, the Prime Minister announced UK support for a "jobs compact" in Ethiopia, which will help provide employment for refugees.

In addition to interventions overseas, the Government has committed to directly resettle in the UK thousands of the most vulnerable refugees from the Middle East and North Africa. The UK is working closely with UNHCR through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme to identify Syrian refugees most at risk and bring them to the UK. The scheme was launched in January 2014 and has helped those in the greatest need and provides a more direct and safer route to the UK, rather than risking the hazardous journey to Europe which has tragically cost so many lives. Since the beginning of the scheme, over 4,400 people have been resettled in the UK. Additionally we have worked closely with the UNHCR to design a scheme which will resettle 'Children at Risk' from the Middle East and North Africa, including their families, with a view to resettling up to 3,000 over the lifetime of this Parliament.

However, there is still more for others to do to provide the resources necessary to deliver longer term interventions which can create jobs and services for both refugees and host countries. To provide relief for host countries we need to: work together with the UN to broaden the group of countries providing assistance, protection and opportunities to refugees in the first safe countries; significantly increase the amount and type of financing available from International Financial Institutions to support economic development in low and middle income host countries; increase the proportion of longer-term development programmes in refugee situations to support a more sustainable approach ;and do more to engage the private sector to create jobs. These interventions need to include the most vulnerable, including women and girls. The Secretary-General has an important role to play in raising and maintaining the public profile of these issues, as well as setting the direction for UN agencies work and supporting more coordinated humanitarian and development approaches in protracted crises. The Secretary-General's role will also include maintaining links with civil society organisations, who are explicitly invited in the New York Declaration to participate in multi-stakeholder alliances to support efforts to implement the commitments made, such as the work towards the two global compacts.

36. The UN Secretary-General should, simultaneously with the work on the New York Declaration start a review to align UN resources—development and

humanitarian—more strategically to address the challenge of refugees and economic migrants. (Paragraph 155)

The Government agrees in part with the Committee's recommendation. The Secretary-General should use his convening power to ensure humanitarian and development assistance is coherent and effective. Initiatives in 2016 such as the World Humanitarian Summit and the publication of the High Level Panel's report on Humanitarian Financing have already focussed minds on the situation surrounding humanitarian financing, and we do not see the need for a fresh review in this regard. Ensuring the correct follow up, including implementing the Grand Bargain and meeting commitments made at the Summit, including ground-breaking commitments to empower women and girls as change agents and leaders, should allow us to make progress on bridging the humanitarian-development divide. However, there could be value in a system-wide functional evaluation that examines whether we have the right architecture, financing and operational tools to align development and humanitarian responses better. This could include an evaluation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and crisis coordination mechanisms. The Global Compact for Refugees offers an opportunity to strengthen protection, empowerment and participation in host countries, and strengthen international support for the economic development of host countries to enable refugees to remain in regions close to their countries of origin.

37. The role of the new Secretary-General will be to ensure that the international agreements of 2015 are placed on a surer footing, sustaining political and public attention on these issues. (Paragraph 161)

The Government agrees with the Committee's comments. In Amina Mohammed, the new Secretary-General has appointed a strong Deputy Secretary-General who will be able to take forward work in a number of important areas, including the agreements of 2015. Agenda 2030, for example, is a historic global agreement to eradicate extreme poverty and achieve sustainable development. We also attach importance to effective implementation of agreements reached in 2016, for example at the World Humanitarian Summit, the entry into force of the Paris Climate Agreement and the ground-breaking commitments made to empower women and girls as change agents and leaders in conflict and crisis contexts.

38. The new Secretary-General will also have to ensure that sufficient financing is available to meet ambitious commitments, that member states are corralled, that the private sector meets its share of the burden and that robust mechanisms are developed to monitor progress. (Paragraph 162)

The Government agrees with the Committee's statement. We welcome the way in which Agenda 2030 priorities have been reflected in the UN's recent Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR). We will work across the UN system and beyond, including through the international financial institutions, to mobilise the necessary resources and ensure these are used to best effect.

DEVELOPMENT: AN INTEGRATED MODEL

39. The UN Development System must become leaner and more coherent but the initiative and power lies with the member states. Nevertheless, the Secretary-General has a limited but important role in delivering reform. The incumbent must offer leadership on this issue and suggest creative policy initiatives to the member states. (Paragraph 176)

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The Government agrees to a large extent and the UK is active in supporting reform, but reform must also be driven from within the UN's Funds and Programmes and Specialised Agencies, and by their respective heads.

40. A new role of Deputy Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs could be a useful innovation. The position, however, must be given the resources commensurate to the task. (Paragraph 177)

As a former High Commissioner for Refugees, the new Secretary-General is familiar with the challenges of integrating the UN's humanitarian and development work. He has now appointed a Deputy Secretary General and we expect her to play a strong role on the development agenda. We hope this will help ensure the empowerment, participation and protection of those most vulnerable, including women and girls and people with disabilities. The UK is a leading donor to the UN's development and humanitarian activity. We will remain active in supporting effective coordination of this work including through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

41. The Secretary-General can use the convening power of the role to institute a review of humanitarian assistance, exploring suggestions that humanitarian and development assistance must be synchronised and work complementarily. This may go some way to easing the financial burden on humanitarian assistance, which is currently enduring too long and beyond its remit. (Paragraph 178)

The Government agrees in part with the Committee's recommendation. As we note in our response to paragraph 155 above, the new Secretary-General should use his convening power to ensure that humanitarian and development assistance is coherent, helping to make humanitarian assistance both more effective and efficient. Initiatives in 2016 such as the World Humanitarian Summit and the publication of the High Level Panel's report on Humanitarian Financing have already focussed minds on the state of humanitarian financing, and we do not see the need for a fresh review in this regard. Ensuring the correct follow up, including implementing the Grand Bargain and meeting commitments made at the Summit, should allow us to make progress on bridging the humanitarian-development divide. However, there could be value in a system-wide functional evaluation that would examine whether we have the right architecture, financing and operational tools to deliver Summit commitments. This could include an evaluation of the IASC, CERF, and crisis coordination mechanisms.

THE UK AT THE UNITED NATIONS

42. Brexit will require the UK to reconsider its methods of operation at the UN. The UK must be resourceful and imaginative, seizing the opportunity to forge new alliances at the UN and to build a fresh relationship with other European states. (Paragraph 195)

43. The UK has strong reasons to continue aligning with the EU and its member states at the UN. On issues such as peace and security, environmental standards and international law and human rights, the EU is the bloc most allied to UK interests and values. (Paragraph 196)

As a Permanent Member of the Security Council, a leading international donor and a strong champion of human rights, the UK has long been one of the most active UN member states. This will remain the case after we leave the EU. We will continue to work closely with EU Member States at the UN to support our mutual interests, as well as with other like-minded allies including G7 and Commonwealth partners.

44. We recommend that the Government should pursue close working relations with the EU and its member states at the UN. The UK should negotiate its exit from the EU bearing in mind that one of our strongest allies in international organisations will be the EU. Therefore, as part of its Brexit negotiations, the UK should aim to set up effective ways of continuing to work closely with the EU at the UN. (Paragraph 197)

45. Simultaneously, the UK should seek to diversify its alliances, creatively considering new opportunities and methods of leveraging its alliances and influencing other regional blocs at the UN. (Paragraph 198)

The UK works closely with a wide range of like-minded partners at the UN to support our mutual interests, including EU Member States, the G7, members of the Commonwealth and other regional groupings. As we look ahead to a future outside the EU, we will continue to develop all of these relationships and take the opportunity to diversify our partnerships, so we can draw on a wide range of alliances to deliver our UN objectives. The UK will continue to play a leading role in the UN, including as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. We are the only major country which will simultaneously meet the NATO target of spending 2% of our GDP on defence and the UN target of spending 0.7% of our GNI on development. And we take an active role in the Geneva Group of major funders of the UN to push for continued reform and value for money.

46. While we recognise that Commonwealth countries may not act as a single group in the UN, the UK should not hesitate to build on past ties and common interests to maximise good relations with its members. (Paragraph 199)

The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendation. As the Committee sets out, the Commonwealth does not work as a recognised regional group as there are others (such as the Africa Group) which operate across the UN system. Nevertheless, there are areas where we can work more closely with Commonwealth members in a UN context and we are committed to encouraging this. For example, the Commonwealth Leaders' Statement on Climate Action, agreed at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in November 2015 shortly before the Paris Climate Conference, showed how the Commonwealth can work collectively to achieve positive impact on the world stage. We also offer support, including financial contributions, to the Small States Offices in Geneva and New York which allow some of the Commonwealth's smaller members to participate fully in UN business.

47. The UK must continue to play a diligent and responsible role in international organisations, proving its value as a permanent member of the Security Council, including exercising leadership in specialised fields. (Paragraph 201)

The Government is committed to maintaining a lead role on the multilateral stage, including at the UN. In the Security Council the UK leads on a number of important dossiers such as Somalia, Libya, Yemen and Cyprus. We are also working to ensure that the Security Council exercises transparency in its work, and that it takes a broad approach to peace and security issues, including addressing potential future risks to peace and security such as climate change. We remain committed to achieving the UN's Global Goals and ending extreme poverty by 2030. The UK is a country that meets its responsibilities to the world's poorest people. Our investment in international development enables us to help shape the world around us rather than be shaped by it. As an outward looking nation, we will continue to take action to tackle the global challenges of our time – poverty and disease, mass migration, insecurity, conflict and climate change – all of which are in the UK's interests.

48. In light of the increased importance of the UN to UK foreign policy, the Government should consider increasing the resources devoted to relations with the UN. (Paragraph 202)

OFFICIAL

As the nature of our international relationships evolves we will keep our structures and resourcing under constant review. In all this we will remain mindful of the pressure on public spending and the importance of ensuring that the UN and other international organisations deliver value for money.

49. There is a risk that the UK, when it starts raising human rights issues outside the EU will become more vulnerable to retaliatory pressures from the country in question—whether diplomatic or commercial—and may thus be inclined to be more timid. This is another reason to continue to work as closely as possible in concert with the EU. (Paragraph 207)

50. Human rights abuses are often the precursor, as well as the symptom of conflicts. The incoming Secretary-General should align the work of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Regular meetings, promoting shared threat assessments and horizon-scanning exercises between the UNHCHR and the UN Secretariat could be a useful exercise. The UK is in a strong position to take the lead on this issue. (Paragraph 208)

The UK's recent re-election to the Human Rights Council exemplifies our commitment to international leadership on human rights. The votes we obtained show that our international partners continue to value the role we play as a defender of the rules-based international system. We seek to combine activism across the waterfront in Geneva and the UN system as a whole, with practical engagement with individual member states to address their human rights challenges. Our HRC re-election pledges include supporting early intervention to prevent the escalation of human rights crises, as well as achieving a more joined-up approach across UN system.

We strongly believe we must be seen to "practise domestically what we preach internationally". To that end, we have in place a standing invitation to Special Rapporteurs to visit the UK. We engage actively with the Universal Periodic Review procedure, both when it is the UK's turn to undergo scrutiny, and by participating fully in the review of other states. We will continue to engage with other governments on improving their own human rights, using our knowledge and relationships to identify the most effective way to do so. Sometimes that will entail private diplomacy instead of – or as well as – more public statements at the Human Rights Council.

The UK will continue to work closely with the EU on human rights issues. Our departure from the EU will be an opportunity to forge wider alliances for the promotion and protection of human rights around the world.