



Government Response to the Report of the House of Lords
Sexual Violence in Conflict Committee (HL123)

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
by Command of Her Majesty

30 June 2016



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Foreword – The Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns DBE

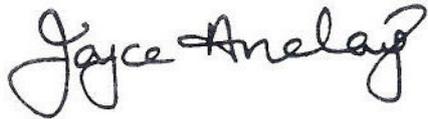
In June 2015 I was honoured to be asked by the Prime Minister to assume the role of his Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and to continue the vital work started by my colleague Lord Hague in 2012. As a Minister in the House of Lords, I had watched with pride as the UK led the world in tackling this issue and I was impressed by how much it had achieved since the launch of PSVI. Through the deployments of the UK Team of PSVI Experts, the launch and subsequent training on the International Protocol and the provision of UK military expertise on sexual violence issues, the Government had made significant strides in better equipping governments and civil society to address these crimes and ensuring survivors receive the support they deserve. The 2014 Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict ensured that this issue was at the very top of the international agenda and foremost in people's minds when considering wider peace and security issues.

With my appointment, I was determined to build on these achievements and deliver even greater progress on this agenda. I have visited a number of conflict and post-conflict countries over the last year and made it my priority to promote PSVI and encourage greater progress in its implementation. That has involved increasing training on the International Protocol, improving military behaviour and providing more support for survivors. Some of this work, and the changes it is delivering on the ground, is described in this response to the House of Lords Select Committee on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

I have met some deeply committed individuals during these visits, including officials from governments and international organisations and civil society activists, all working determinedly to bring about an end to the use of sexual violence in conflict. Most humbling of all has been the courage of the many survivors whom I have met and who have been willing to share their experiences with me. Each time I have been moved by the strength of the human spirit. But I have also been struck by how frequently they still bear a sense of shame for what has happened to them, as if they were responsible, reinforced by a rejection from their family or by being disowned by their community. This, of course, has devastating consequences for them as individuals. But it also undermines longer-term reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts. This is why I have decided to focus much of our PSVI effort over the next few years on tackling this stigma and working with local community and faith leaders, politicians, NGOs and – critically– survivors themselves to identify how the international community can help overcome it.

External advice and expertise will play a crucial role in developing and implementing this programme of work – as it has over the course of the last four years. Parliament has a particularly important role to play. The Select Committee's inquiry into PSVI

has identified a number of important issues for us to consider and made a number of useful recommendations. The Government's response to these is set out below. On behalf of the Government I would like to thank the Chair and the distinguished members of the Committee for the thoroughness with which they approached this work and the constructive nature of their engagement. I very much welcome the recent establishment of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Sexual Violence in Conflict as an opportunity to continue our engagement on these issues and look forward to updating them at frequent intervals.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayce Anelay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns DBE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) welcomes the report of The House of Lords Select Committee on Sexual Violence in Conflict. We share the Committee's view that the inquiry and the report, based on a broad range of witness testimony and oral and written evidence, makes a valuable assessment of this issue and offers a number of important conclusions and recommendations which will be helpful in guiding the Government's future policy and practice on this agenda.

2. As set out in our written evidence to the Committee, we believe the Government has achieved considerable progress since the launch of the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) in 2012. We are pleased that the Committee shares this view. We agree with the Committee that there is still much more to do. Changing attitudes and behaviour is a long-term effort and will not be achieved by a single country or organisation acting alone. It will take the collective international effort of governments, international organisations, militaries, parliaments, civil society groups and individuals, including survivors. The Government remains resolutely committed to doing so.

3. As the Committee acknowledges, the 2014 Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict placed sexual violence firmly on the international peace and security agenda. The Government has worked to embed this progress around the world and to achieve change at country level which benefits those most in need. For example, the Government has supported:

- NGOs in their legal work with survivors in Bosnia and Herzegovina which resulted in landmark rulings, paving the way for thousands of survivors in Bosnia to claim compensation and granting 'civil war victim' status to a male survivor for the first time.
- The training of 32 officials, including lawyers, human rights defenders and members of the judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina on human rights and the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict, helping secure eight prosecutions.
- Advocacy efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina that lead to a change in the definition of rape in the criminal code so that it is now classified as a crime against humanity and war crime against civilians.
- The creation of national guidelines for supporting survivors of sexual violence in Kosovo. Crucially, our support has included Serbian members of civil society and other ethnic minorities, thus providing an opportunity for all members of society to work together.
- The mapping of legislation in Iraq to identify barriers to holding perpetrators of sexual violence to account and determining how these can be addressed.

- The training of health professionals and human rights defenders in Syria and Nepal in collecting and preserving evidence of human rights abuses, including sexual violence, for future prosecutions.
- A network of women survivors of sexual violence in Colombia that helps other survivors access justice and other support programmes.
- A faith-based project in DRC through which more than 200 sexual violence survivors have come forward to receive counselling and 75 faith leaders have received training on responding to sexual violence and the needs of survivors.
- Building local capacity among DRC health, legal and law enforcement professionals to investigate sexual violence through documentation, collection, and the preservation of forensic evidence. This work has led to 20 documentation missions and the launch of four criminal trials.

4. Since the Summit, we have also seen some important steps taken by other Governments around the world to tackle sexual violence in conflict, including:

- The Government of the DRC has launched an action plan for the Congolese Army on preventing sexual violence and established an implementation commission. President Kabila has also appointed a Special Representative on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment.
- The Government of Côte d'Ivoire has embarked upon a process of legal reform, including expanding its definition of sexual violence and harmonising its Criminal and Civil Codes with international standards. The Government has also drafted a law on the protection of victims and witnesses. A commitment to fight against sexual violence has been signed by 47 Ivorian commanders.
- The Government of Colombia has trained 800 members of its armed forces on gender-based violence prevention and have appointed a Criminal Justice Adviser to help ensure that transitional justice agreements properly reflect sexual violence issues.
- The Governments of Croatia and Kosovo have revised their laws in order to allow victims of sexual violence from the conflict in the 1990s to access compensation, state support and benefits.
- NATO, the EU and the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) have revised their policies on responses to sexual violence. All three are now working to embed new policies across their work.
- The International Committee of the Red Cross has increased its work on sexual violence in conflict and has approximately 10 programmes implementing PSVI-related initiatives, with a particular focus on psycho-social support.

5. The Government's 2015 manifesto made clear its long-term commitment to PSVI: "*Over the last five years we have stood up for what we believe in...leading the*

world in tackling sexual violence in conflict...We will continue this leadership...We will drive forward the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative". Since her appointment in June 2015, Baroness Anelay of St Johns, the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, has worked tirelessly to do so. She has visited Bosnia, Colombia, Croatia, DRC, Iraq, Nigeria, Kosovo and Slovenia to promote progress on PSVI, support local project implementation and – in DRC and Iraq – launch and encourage the use of the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict (the International Protocol). She has raised the profile of the Government's work with like-minded allies and key international partners, including the UN and the African Union (AU) and secured their support for future programming. And she has guided the development of an ambitious plan of future PSVI activity to underpin the Initiative over the next few years.

6. The Government intends to build on the progress achieved to date and working in partnership with other governments, the UN, AU, other multilateral organisations and NGOs, will focus our efforts primarily on:

- (i) Ensuring that militaries and security forces around the world are better trained to prevent and respond to crimes of sexual violence. The UK has already provided training on sexual violence issues to over 10,000 African peacekeeping military and police personnel; 3,600 Peshmerga troops in Iraq; 200 officials from Croatia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Romania, and Slovenia; and 3,500 members of the Malian Army through the EU training Mission. The Ministry of Defence is working up plans to expand this training even further, championed by the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff General Gordon Messenger.
- (ii) Delivering justice for survivors. This will include improving the collection and storage of evidence as guided by the International Protocol. The Government has already built the capacity of governments, judiciary, police, military and civil society to strengthen prosecution of sexual violence through training on the use of the International Protocol in Bosnia, Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Kosovo, Nepal and Uganda. We have translated the International Protocol into Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian, Burmese, French, Kurdish, Lingala, Serbian, Spanish and Swahili. We will continue with this work, as well as press for specific domestic legislative changes that will improve the lives of survivors and children born of rape.
- (iii) Challenging harmful attitudes to sexual violence in conflict and working to end the stigma suffered by many survivors and children born of rape which can leave them ostracised from their families and communities. The Government wants to work with the international community to do more to change the social norms or perceptions that accept, condone or justify sexual violence, so that victims are no longer shamed or punished. This is crucial not just for the survivor's recovery, but also for that of their families and communities. We consider it an essential part of longer-term post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation efforts.

7. This work will be underpinned by further UK programmes and funding, particularly to NGOs and grass roots organisations in over a dozen countries. This will build on the £30 million already provided to support work with survivors, contributions to international organisations, training on the International Protocol and deployments of members of the PSVI Team of Experts. We look forward to providing the newly-established All Party Parliamentary Group on Sexual Violence in Conflict with details of our plans in due course.

8. The following chapters contain the Government's response to each of the Committee's recommendations, as set out by theme in their report. It reflects input from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Department for International Development (DFID), Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Home Office (HO). We have grouped recommendations where appropriate and provided additional commentary on the Committee's conclusions as an introduction to each chapter where we considered it helpful.

II. POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

9. The Government welcomes the Committee's assessment that "*recent efforts to prioritise preventing sexual violence in conflict were necessary and important*" and shares the Committee's assessment of the impact that sexual violence can have on gender discrimination, post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding and international peace and security. In this regard the Government welcomes the Committee's support to the PSVI and their recognition of the impact that PSVI has had on galvanising international action.

10. The Government is committed to maintaining the momentum generated by PSVI. As set out in the introduction to this paper, we have ambitious plans for the future that require continued cooperation with and further support from other governments, international organisations and civil society. We want to maximise every opportunity to keep PSVI at the top of the international policy agenda. In the immediate future, this includes looking at how we can improve military training and behaviour on sexual violence in conflict as part of the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial: London, 2016 in September and how the international community can better work together to tackle survivor stigma at this year's UN General Assembly Ministerial Week.

11. We will also continue to work to embed the commitments to action from the 2013 G8 and UNGA Declarations and the 2014 Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict and to encourage ongoing implementation of these. The report published in November 2015 under the German G7 Presidency on the implementation of the G8 Declaration is a useful overview of progress to date. We will encourage future G7 Presidents to maintain PSVI on the G7 agenda.

12. As we discussed with the Committee, the large number (156) of endorsers of the UNGA Declaration means that monitoring implementation is challenging. Establishing a formal mechanism would require financial and human resources. This would reduce our ability to pursue other, higher impact PSVI work. We therefore continue to prefer a more informal approach.

13. With regard to the Committee's specific recommendations under this chapter:

- ***The Government should make clear the criteria for selecting (and deselecting) target countries for the PSVI, and should regularly report to Parliament on its application of those criteria.***

14. The Government has pursued or supported PSVI activity in a wide range of countries over the last four years, including Burma, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Kosovo, Mali, Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka and Syria.

15. We take a number of factors into account when identifying where to work. This includes the extent and impact of sexual violence in the country under consideration, the national and international response to date and the particular role the UK can play in reinforcing or complementing existing efforts. We do not plan to

change this approach, but will continue to welcome suggestions or feedback on specific countries.

- ***The UK's policy goals in this area must be ambitious, transparent and deliverable and the strategic goals of the PSVI clearly articulated. A strategic plan and a five-year road map to support their delivery should be published. Doing this would demonstrate the Government's ongoing commitment and ensure that resources are targeted most effectively.***

16. The Government agrees that PSVI should be ambitious, transparent and deliverable. We believe this has been the case since its launch in 2012. We note with interest the Committee's suggestion for a strategic plan and accompanying road map and undertake to consider this further, including how it might incorporate existing planning. We propose to consult on this recommendation with interested departments and external partners.

- ***We believe that the PSVI should be enhanced and enduring. To ensure this the Government should:***
 - (a) ***Embed the PSVI in the relevant parts of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO);***

17. PSVI is already mainstreamed across a range of FCO activity. As outlined above, our Embassies and High Commissions support PSVI activity in a number of countries. This includes lobbying host governments to implement their PSVI commitments and working with local project implementers to provide training, for example using the International Protocol, or supporting survivors. PSVI also features prominently in our work at the UN and other multilateral institutions. PSVI is also reflected in relevant FCO thematic activity, such as international justice and war crimes.

- (b) ***Formally recognise the value of the PSVI to the work of the Department for International Development (DfID), the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Home Office and other departments; and***

18. DFID's work on violence against women and girls includes specific activity on tackling sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflict and emergency situations. As part of DFID's humanitarian response in Syria for example, this includes funding a number of NGOs and UN agencies to provide specialist assistance to those affected by SGBV, including clinical care for rape survivors, case management and counselling, reproductive healthcare and case assistance. This work is led by Baroness Verma in her role as Ministerial Champion on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Overseas. She and Baroness Anelay meet regularly to ensure complementarity between their respective departments.

19. The Armed Forces have a unique role in providing security and stability and therefore preventing and responding to sexual violence in regions experiencing crisis and conflict. Under the leadership of the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, the MOD is committed to implementing PSVI and the broader Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda throughout its work. The appointment of General Gordon

Messenger, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, as the Military Champion for PSVI and WPS, and the subsequent development of related doctrine and policies, reflects the value the MOD places on these issues.

20. In her role as the Prime Minister's Special Representative, Baroness Anelay speaks about PSVI at relevant meetings of the cross-Whitehall Inter Ministerial group on Violence Against Women and Girls chaired by the Home Secretary. These meetings are useful opportunities to coordinate and disseminate the Government's PSVI activities and to identify areas for collaboration. As an example of our wider engagement, Baroness Anelay is working with the Minister with Responsibility for Syrian Refugees, to identify how PSVI sits within the Government's objectives for the UK's Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme. The Prime Minister's Special Representative is considering re-establishing a PSVI specific cross-departmental group as a means of furthering this type of engagement.

(c) ***Employ the same or similar team of experts who helped establish the PSVI to produce the strategic plan and five-year road map.***

21. The Government consulted a wide range of civil society experts, including NGOs, academics and legal professionals, when first developing our work on PSVI. We have continued to seek external expertise at all stages as PSVI has developed. This advice has proved invaluable. We will maintain this consultative approach.

➤ ***We expect to see the Government's objectives for the PSVI reflected in the Single Departmental Plans.***

22. The FCO's single departmental plan set out our priority objectives for 2015 to 2020. It includes a commitment to "*use our global influence and diplomatic network to protect and promote our interests and values [and to] tackle conflict and build stability overseas, taking a long-term approach to preventing conflict, state failure and irregular migration, and further scaling up the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) to over £1bn per year over the parliamentary term. A key objective of the Fund will be to drive forward the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative*".

23. As it reflects the full breadth of the department's activity, it is not possible for the single departmental plan to set out the detail of each policy objective. Rather, this is captured in internal FCO business work planning which guides the development and implementation of the Department's work. This includes the following outcomes on PSVI and WPS for 2016-2017:

- (i) PSVI and WPS are prominent in the preparation and delivery of the World Humanitarian Summit, the UK-hosted peacekeeping conference and the NATO Summit;
- (ii) Delivering increased women's participation in peace/post-conflict processes, with a focus on Syria, Yemen, Somalia and South Sudan;
- (iii) An action plan of political and legal commitments to end the stigmatisation of survivors of sexual violence;
- (iv) Additional training on the International Protocol in Burma, DRC, Iraq/Syria and Sri Lanka and an updated Protocol to ensure it better reflects the needs of those using it and the context within which they work; and

(v) Increased funding for projects to support this work, in particular in PSVI and WPS priority countries.

24. We monitor progress against these outcomes every six months as part of an internal exercise.

➤ ***The Government should prepare an annual report on its progress against achieving the objectives set out in the strategic plan for the PSVI. This report should be submitted to Parliament.***

25. The Government already reports on PSVI progress through its annual report to Parliament on progress in implementing the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and through the FCO's annual human rights report. We also provide regular updates on social and other media, both from London and from our Posts overseas. We will continue to do so. Dedicating staff resource for the level of reporting suggested by the Committee would require a decrease in staff pursuing practical PSVI implementation. We believe our priority should be on securing in-country progress in ending the use of sexual violence in conflict and promoting greater support to survivors.

➤ ***We recommend that the Government should put to good use the power and potential of the private sector to tackle issues of gender-based violence (GBV), which we believe would enhance corporate social responsibility in the commercial world.***

26. The Government agrees with the Committee that the private sector has a key role to play in supporting the full respect of human rights, including the prevention of SGBV. The Government's recently updated National Action Plan on Implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bhr-action-plan>) sets out our commitment to help business fulfil its responsibility to respect human rights throughout its operations. Whilst the Plan does not set out business responsibility with regard to specific human rights we would expect this responsibility to include SGBV and would encourage business accordingly.

27. In addition to our work on the UNGPs, the Government is also an enthusiastic advocate of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights established by the UK and US governments in 2000. The Voluntary Principles provide guidance to extractive companies – many of which operate in conflict and post-conflict affected countries where sexual violence is or has been prevalent – on how to manage their security operations in a manner that reduces the risk of human rights abuses through practical advice, including risk assessments, training of private and public security guards and building good relations with the communities in which the companies operate. As a member of the Voluntary Principles Initiative Steering Committee and Voluntary Principles Association Board of Directors the Government will continue to encourage companies to monitor and report incidents of SGBV through the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

➤ ***We urge the MoD to publish its military policies on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and on the PSVI at the earliest opportunity. We call on***

the Government to set out the timeline for their publication and incorporation into military doctrine.

28. The MOD is committed to aligning all Armed Forces doctrine with the WPS and PSVI agendas wherever applicable and appropriate and to incorporate these agendas within the everyday operation of UK Forces. MOD officials are currently drafting a WPS policy document for the Military which will guide future implementation of WPS and PSVI within the Armed Forces. They expect this policy document to be published in the autumn.

➤ ***The Government should make full use of the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements (MARA) established under United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1960 to record and publicise states' progress on measures to prevent sexual violence in conflict. We also recommend that the Government work to ensure regular reporting of action taken against sexual violence in conflict within the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review process.***

29. The MARA is a UN process intended to provide “*systematic, timely, reliable and objective information on conflict-related sexual violence to the UN Security Council that will help reduce the risk of sexual violence and improve assistance to survivors*”, including information on patterns and trends and on parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for these acts. This information is also for internal UN use and informs the annual report of the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to the Security Council.

30. We have discussed this recommendation with the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. We agree with them that for various reasons, including resources and political neutrality, the MARA is not an appropriate mechanism by which to monitor the implementation of the G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict or the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict. We will, however, continue to use the information from the MARA to inform our work and future programming.

31. The Government already uses the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to make recommendations on sexual violence. Previous examples include encouraging Bosnia and Herzegovina to “*ensure adequately trained prosecutors, judges and staff in the justice systems of the Federation and of Republika Srpska in order to make timely and efficient progress on war crime cases, including the sensitive handling of those dealing with sexual violence*”.

32. We have also encouraged the DRC to “*ensure that perpetrators of crimes of sexual violence are consistently brought to justice, and guarantee the protection of witnesses and survivors*” and to “*take further steps to tackle sexual violence, bring perpetrators of human rights violations to justice and ensure full implementation of the 2006 law against sexual violence, including through urgent implementation of the zero tolerance policy and establishment of a State-run vetting mechanism to remove the worst abusers from the Congolese army*”. We pose advance questions on sexual violence to states under review as well as in the body of UK statements made during the UPR dialogue.

➤ ***It is critical that preventing sexual violence in conflict remains at the forefront of the international political agenda. To achieve this, the Government should:***

(a) Work with other countries to bring about a global conference on preventing sexual violence in conflict, to be hosted by a different state every four years;

33. We fully agree with the Committee on the importance of keeping PSVI at the very top of the international political agenda. We welcome the support of any government in doing so, including through the convening of international meetings, such as that hosted by the Government of Austria in Graz on 2 - 3 of June 2016. We are not persuaded however that a global conference every four years is necessary to achieve progress on this agenda.

(b) Ensure sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a standing item on the agenda of the Commission on the Status of Women; and

34. The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the pre-eminent UN gathering on women's rights. As the largest global policymaking mechanism on women and girls' rights it provides an important forum for supporting the UK's work on women's rights globally. This year's CSW was particularly important for work on SGBV. The review strand of the CSW meeting focused on Violence Against Women and Girls and came immediately after the agreement of the "2030 Agenda" which had a strong focus on gender equality and a commitment to the target of ending violence against women and girls.

35. The Government recognises the importance of ensuring that violence against women and girls, particularly efforts to ensure that the most marginalised girls and women are reached, remains an important issue for inclusion in the agendas of future CSWs and will continue to lobby UN Women and other parties to ensure that SGBV remains a strong focus. CSW addresses the full range of women's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and the Government believes it should continue to do so. We do not, therefore, agree that SGBV should become the only standing item at CSW if this risks limiting the international community's ability to discuss other important women's rights issues.

(c) Encourage the Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to include the consideration of the human rights of women in conflict situations in its monitoring process, in accordance with CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30.

36. The CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations makes clear that the Convention applies in conflict and post-conflict settings and that countries which have ratified the Convention should ensure that women's human rights are protected before, during and after conflict. It also outlines various issues facing women in these settings, including violence against them and the challenges they face in

accessing justice, education, employment and health. The Government agrees that the CEDAW Committee should monitor and report on the issues included in General Recommendation No.30 and will encourage them to do so.

- ***It is encouraging that the most recent UNSCR, Resolution 2242, integrates the WPS Agenda across all country-specific situations being addressed by the UN Security Council. We hope this will be a first step and we urge the Government to ensure that WPS is mainstreamed and preventing sexual violence in conflict considerations are always included in the Security Council's thematic and country mandates.***

37. As lead nation on WPS in the UN Security Council the UK played a key role in advocating for an ambitious UNSCR to commemorate last year's High Level Review of UNSCR 1325. We were pleased with the text of UNSCR 2242, which we believe established a series of far-reaching goals on this agenda for the future. This includes its recognition of the need to do more to integrate WPS throughout the working methods of the Security Council. Since its adoption, the Government has advocated for WPS, and sexual violence where appropriate, to be included in relevant thematic and country mandates. We also look for regular opportunities for civil society, UN Women or the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to brief the Security Council so as to ensure it has as much information on these issues as possible to inform its work. We encourage other Security Council members to support our efforts.

- ***We believe that the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (the 'Istanbul Convention') is a valuable instrument, which is fully in line with the Government's policy priorities of preventing sexual violence in conflict and preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG) more widely. The Government should therefore ratify the Istanbul Convention at the earliest opportunity.***

38. The previous Government signed the Istanbul Convention to show the strong commitment it placed on tackling violence against women and girls. The measures already in place in the UK to protect women and girls from violence in most cases comply with or go further than the Convention requires. Nonetheless the Government remains committed to ratifying the Convention as soon as possible.

39. There is one respect in which UK legislation is not currently compliant with the Convention. This concerns the application of extra-territorial jurisdiction, i.e. the ability to prosecute certain offences that occur outside our national borders. Primary legislation is required in order to effect the necessary changes in this area to allow us to ratify. We intend to identify the best way to do this and pursue it once Parliamentary time allows.

- ***As and when there is a review of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the 'Genocide Convention'), the intention to destroy a group, in whole or part, on the grounds of gender, gender identity and sexual orientation should be incorporated within the Convention.***

40. We note the Committee's recommendation to incorporate gender, gender identity and sexual orientation into the Genocide Convention as and when a review of the Convention takes place. We are not aware of a review in the foreseeable future but should there be one we will give due consideration to the Committee's suggestion.

- ***We recommend that the Government should increase its voluntary contributions to the work of the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC so as to strengthen its capacity to conduct investigations into crimes of sexual violence in conflict.***

41. As a State Party, the Government provides assessed contributions to the ICC. Our 2016 contribution is £7.5 million. We do not currently supplement our assessed contribution with voluntary funding to the ICC or the Office of the Prosecutor and have no immediate plans to do so. Separately, since 2002, the Government has provided £2.9 million in voluntary funding to the ICC Trust Fund for Victims which supports programmes around the world for survivors of atrocity crimes, including that of sexual violence.

III. PREVENTION

42. The Government welcomes the Committee's support for our objectives to end impunity for sexual violence in conflict and to hold the perpetrators to account. The impact of our work in this area will take time to become fully apparent. But we believe that international rulings – such as the ICC's historic conviction in March 2016 of Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo for his responsibility for sexual violence crimes committed by the soldiers under his command in the Central African Republic – as well as local action – such as that in DRC by the UK-funded NGO TRIAL to build the capacity of local actors through training on the International Protocol, resulting in the submission of cases on behalf of 132 Congolese victims and the launch of 4 criminal trials – send an important message that these acts will no longer go unpunished.

43. The Government agrees with the Committee that our work on deterrence might benefit from further research. We propose to discuss options for such research with the Women, Peace and Security Centre at the London School of Economics. We also plan to commission research on other areas of PSVI focus this year, including into the long-term social and economic impact of survivor stigma. We will ensure that any research commissioned includes a focus on men and boys.

44. The Government also agrees with the Committee that multiannual funding is important to ensure the sustainability of this and wider PSVI work. We are providing such funding for PSVI and related programming in over a dozen conflict-affected and post-conflict countries through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy and other funding mechanisms.

45. With regard to the Committee's specific recommendations under this chapter:

- ***DfID has done admirable work to combat VAWG. In building on that work, the Government needs to ensure that ending sexual violence against men and boys is also a priority.***

46. Sexual violence against men and boys has been reported in 25 armed conflicts over the last decade. Ending sexual violence against men and boys is a priority for the Government and is encompassed within our wider efforts to tackle SGBV. One of PSVI's key objectives since its launch has been to raise awareness of men and boys as victims as well as perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict. The 2013 G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict was the first high-level international document to recognise the particular needs of male victims. This was reinforced by UN Security Council Resolution 2106 and the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict later that year.

47. Tackling the root causes of this violence is key to its prevention. We need to understand better the harmful social norms that drive violent behaviour and to build the evidence base to inform our work. DFID's £25 million investment in a research and innovation fund to produce ground breaking, rigorous evidence on what works to prevent violence, including in conflict contexts, will make an important contribution to this effort.

- ***We recommend that the Independent Commission for Aid Impact conducts a review of funding for the prevention of sexual violence in conflict to assess the effects of moving to the new funding mechanism on non-security and justice programming and for local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society.***

48. The Government has drawn this recommendation to the attention of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI). As is standard practice, ICAI should agree the focus of its future reporting with the International Development Committee rather than the Government.

- ***The PSVI places great emphasis on ending impunity and ensuring accountability. An evaluation of the preventative value of such policies and programmes should therefore be included as part of the research commissioned by the Government. In addition, given the dearth of statistics and research on male victims, this too should be addressed.***
- ***We recommend developing a common system for monitoring and evaluating data about sexual violence in conflict which, once tested, can be shared with the Government's international partners.***

49. We welcome both of these recommendations from the Committee which support our belief in the importance of an evidence-based approach to the Government's work on PSVI and SGBV more broadly. We propose to discuss options for pursuing research along the lines suggested by the Committee with the Women, Peace and Security Centre at the London School of Economics.

- ***The Government should redouble its efforts to elicit and share good practice on measures to mitigate or prevent sexual violence in conflict. We recommend a close examination of the inter-departmental Agency Working Group set up in the US under Executive Order 13623, 'Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls Globally'; consideration should be given to establishing a similar working group in the UK, with a view to sharing good practice internationally.***

50. The US Interagency Working Group, convened by the White House and co-chaired by the State Department and USAID, brings together relevant US agencies to coordinate across government on the implementation of the US strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally. By deepening interagency engagement, the Working Group aims to improve and expand upon current work to prevent SGBV and incorporate expertise from across government. Three smaller interagency committees sit under the main Working Group, with a focus on best practices and research, monitoring and evaluation, and mapping and pilot countries. An update to the US strategy is expected this year and the future format of the Working Group may change as a result.

51. The Home Secretary-chaired cross-Whitehall Inter-Ministerial group on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) performs a similar UK role. The group

oversees the implementation of the “Government’s Strategy to End Violence Against Women and Girls: 2016 – 2020”, ensures that the Government’s domestic and international commitments on VAWG remain on track and encourages collaboration between departments. The group provides an important forum to share expertise and best practice. Both Baroness Anelay, in her role as the Prime Minister’s Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and FCO Minister of State for Human Rights, and Baroness Verma as Ministerial Champion on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Overseas, attend this group.

- ***Following the training needs analysis commissioned by the MoD, we expect to see adequate training on the PSVI and WPS for all new recruits. We recommend that details of the revised training provision should be made publicly available. This training must be refreshed at regular intervals throughout the careers of military personnel. Pre-deployment training and post-deployment review procedures should also be standardised.***
- ***Training delivered in the UK to officers from overseas and to foreign military forces elsewhere should also include the PSVI and WPS. The Government should outline the timeline for the completion of the training review, publication and the roll-out of training programmes on the PSVI and WPS.***
- ***Professional training courses, which include the PSVI and WPS, should be provided to police officers from overseas. The courses should include female as well as male officers, and include instruction on the gathering of evidence of sexual violence to be used in the prosecution of offenders. The Home Office should provide funding for these courses.***
- ***The Government should put in place review processes to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of both the training delivered to foreign military forces and the newly introduced gender advisory positions.***
- ***Given that the demand from foreign military forces for training currently exceeds capacity to provide it, we urge the Government to consider how provision might be increased, for example through increasing partnership work with other governments and regional organisations.***

52. The MOD recognises the need to incorporate WPS and PSVI into all relevant training. Currently, operational law training is delivered annually to the Armed Forces covering the law of armed conflict (LOAC), including: protection of civilians; the imperative to act within domestic and international law; and individual and command responsibility. This training also includes prohibitions on discriminatory treatment, personal violence, and humiliating and degrading treatment, as required by the LOAC principles of distinction and humanity. At the High Level Review of UNSCR 1325 the MOD committed to providing WPS training as part of pre-deployment training (PDT) by November 2016. This PDT has been developed and is

now delivered to all troops deploying on land based operations. Once embedded, this training will be rolled out for inclusion in PDT for all operations.

53. The MOD is carrying out a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to identify the level of training Service personnel should receive on WPS and PSVI and to establish a clearly defined training standard both for existing personnel and new recruits. The TNA will also assess the content and means of delivering this training. The MOD will draw from existing NATO training on these issues. At this stage, the MOD expects the basic training to be refreshed at least every year.

54. The TNA will also make recommendations on how to reflect gender issues across all service personnel training in the Armed Forces. Training packages will include specific elements on gender sensitivity and preventing sexual violence in conflict and will be reviewed regularly to ensure the content is relevant and of high quality. In addition, the TNA will consider how best to integrate gender advisors into the command structure. The means for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of these gender advisors will follow the TNA. In line with standard procedure on Armed Forces training, the MOD does not propose to make the training materials publicly available. The TNA will report in July 2016.

55. Training currently delivered to foreign officers who attend the Brigade Legal Officers' Course in Warminster also includes prohibitions on discriminatory treatment, personal violence, and humiliating and degrading treatment. The training is evaluated through student feedback which is used to inform subsequent courses. The WPS and PSVI content of the training provided by the MOD's Short Term Training Teams and by British Peace Support Teams in South and East Africa is currently being reviewed by the Stabilisation Unit for compliance with the International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014.

56. In January 2016, the MOD conducted a gender "train the trainer" course in conjunction with the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations to provide 34 students with NATO accredited, operational gender training. This was the first of its kind in the UK. The MOD will continue to work with international partners to identify best practice and ensure all training is of the highest standard and to share its training experience to help raise international standards.

57. The Government already supports a number of initiatives to train military and police personnel on gathering evidence of sexual violence in conflict. Our primary focus has been on building their capacity to use the International Protocol, for example that we have provided through the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region. In addition, we have: trained police officers and legal officials in Somalia; supported the development of a Female Policing Plan in Afghanistan which covers education, recruitment and working conditions; and mentored the Free Syrian Police on gender awareness and female representation.

➤ ***The Government should ask NATO to increase its efforts to collect and disseminate good practice on WPS and preventing sexual violence.***

58. The Government has worked closely with NATO, Allies and partner nations to improve the development and dissemination of good practice on PSVI and WPS.

This includes contributing to the development of the first NATO military guidelines on sexual and gender-based violence which outline how NATO military personnel in the field or on mission should engage with victims and report to command structures. We have also contributed to the revision of the NATO action plan on UNSCR 1325 with a view to ensuring the sustainability and viability of NATO's work in this area. NATO's Strategic Report to the Heads of State and Government on progress achieved in the implementation of the NATO policy and Action Plan on WPS will be presented at the Warsaw Summit in July. We are currently working with the NATO International Staff to secure UK NGO representation on a NATO civil society advisory panel to provide external advice to NATO on their policies.

- ***The Government should ensure that the UK's and Global Coalition Partner's communications strategies include materials to counter Daesh's use of rape, sexual violence and sexual slavery as instruments of terror.***

59. The Government's longstanding policy on counter Daesh communications has been to ensure that Daesh atrocities are not highlighted through government channels. This is to reduce their desired effect of spreading fear and to help reduce the impact of Daesh's propaganda. Instead we work to promote how the UK, as part of the Global Coalition, is supporting partners to prevent conflict-related sexual violence and counter Daesh's propaganda promoting these instruments of terror. In this way, rather than focus on the atrocities we focus on the steps we are taking to prevent further abuses, give survivors a voice, and put in place the accountability measures needed to give survivors the justice they deserve.

60. As Co-Chair of the Global Coalition's Communications Working Group we regularly raise awareness in UK and international media of efforts to bring Daesh perpetrators of conflict related sexual violence to account. We have also supported partners in the region to run campaigns explaining that sexual violence against men and women is unacceptable and in their efforts to amplify positive voices among civil society, including via the UAE-based Sawab Center.

- ***We recommend that given the high regard in which HRDs are held in many conflict zones, the Government should work to increase legal protection, funding and security, pressing for the more effective implementation of the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, along with the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders.***

61. The Government works to uphold the rule of law in conflict zones and to ensure that the rights of all citizens are protected. We strongly support the implementation of the UNGA Resolution on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and the effective implementation and use of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders.

62. Through our programme funding we actively support the work of Human Rights Defenders, including in conflict zones. We have provided support to projects in a number of countries including Bangladesh, Colombia and Russia. We have also

provided emergency assistance to HRDs through contributions to the global organisation “Lifeline”.

- ***The violation of rights and rise in VAWG can be a precursor to conflict. The Government should integrate gender-sensitive and child protection measures into all appropriate policies, including bringing those issues into its early warning systems. There is a need for the Government, the UN and others, including regional organisations with responsibilities for peace and security, to strengthen their early warning systems and conflict prevention activities.***

63. The Government has made significant investments in early warning and crisis response. We continue to work to improve these systems and, in line with the commitment we made at the High Level Review of UNSCR 1325 in October 2015, will ensure that by September 2016 all our early warning and joint conflict analysis and assessment tools are fully gender-sensitive. We are considering how best to incorporate sexual violence into conflict early warning systems.

64. The Government is working with a number of multilateral organisations to improve early warning of conflict. This includes supporting African Union efforts to develop its Continental Early Warning System and work to improve the UN’s conflict prevention and peacebuilding capacity.

IV. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

65. The Government is clear that conflict resolution and peace processes in which women meaningfully participate are more likely to succeed. Peace agreements that result from negotiations involving women are 35 per cent more likely to last for fifteen years.¹ However, women are usually excluded: between 1992 and 2011, only two per cent of chief mediators and nine percent of negotiators in peace processes were female.² Ensuring that women's rights are safeguarded, that they are able to take part in political processes, and that they are able to participate fully in conflict resolution are Government priorities.

66. The UK is an international leader on the WPS agenda. In 2006, we developed a National Action Plan – one of the first countries to do so – to determine how we would implement UN UNSCR 1325 on WPS. The Government's current work is guided by our third National Action Plan, launched jointly by the FCO, DFID and MOD in 2014, as well as the eight ambitious commitments we made at the UN Security Council's High Level Review in 2015, which marked the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325.

67. With regard to the Committee's specific recommendations under this chapter:

- ***The Government should increase its efforts in regard to facilitating women's participation in peacebuilding. The Government should encourage mediators at peace negotiations to ensure gender diversity in their teams. We urge the Government to support the newly established Syrian Women's Advisory Board and push for its inclusion as an integral part of the ongoing peace negotiations.***
- ***The Government should work to ensure that when it is a participant in talks on conflict resolution, prevention and peacebuilding that women are included on the same terms as men, and are not marginalised. The Government should look to support this inclusion, for example through increased funding, capacity building and the provision of security for women's organisations. A separate, appropriate representative on children's rights, such as the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, should also be present at such talks.***

68. At the High Level Review of UNSCR 1325 the Government committed to ensuring that *"in arranging all future UK-hosted peacebuilding events we will identify women involved in the conflict and shine a torch on them to make sure their voices are heard. We will promote the active participation of women in such discussions through political and/or financial support. We will also provide support, including lobbying at the highest levels, to ensure women's voices are represented in wider peace processes, negotiations, and state-building – and we will provide support at local level to build the capacity of women to participate effectively."*

¹ Stone, L. in O'Reilly et al (2015) 'Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes', International Peace Institute

² UN Women (2012) 'Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections Between Presence and Influence'

69. The Government is determined to implement this commitment. In addition to Syria, we are actively supporting women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict processes in Libya, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen, through political engagement with the relevant parties and funding support. Through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund and other funding mechanisms we are providing support to a number of projects to increase women's political participation as well as their capacity to participate, including in Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen.

70. With regard to Syria, the Women's Advisory Board was established by Staffan de Mistura, the UN Envoy for Syria, after lobbying from the UK and other likeminded states. Of its 12 women, six are from the Syrian Women's Initiative for Peace and Democracy, which is an organisation that has received UK-funded training through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Our support for the Women's Advisory Board reflects our wider political commitment to women's participation in the intra-Syrian peace talks and our programmatic support to peacebuilding initiatives and civil society groups inside Syria.

71. In the lead-up to the peace talks, we strongly advocated for both the UN and the High Negotiations Committee (HNC) to include women in the negotiations. Alongside the three women in their Negotiating Team, the HNC also established a separate seven member Women's Consultative Committee that advises the HNC. The HNC also committed to a 30 per cent quota for female representation in any future governing body. The Government is providing technical assistance and capacity-building support to the HNC.

72. Our 2016 Conflict, Stability and Security Fund programmes in Syria ensures that all projects are gender-sensitive and reflect WPS and PSVI themes as far as possible. Our Embassy in Beirut has hosted several sessions with female Syrian civil society members and activists to help ensure the views of Syrian women are heard and that the impact of the conflict on women is fully understood. This reflects a wider determination on the part of the Government to ensure that women have a greater role and meaningful voice in a future Syria.

➤ ***The Government should ring-fence some of the funding it committed at the Syrian Donors Conference in February 2016, to support women's participation and gender equality. The proportion ring-fenced should be in line with the UN target of 15% of funds spent on peacebuilding being dedicated to projects that address women's needs and gender equality.***

73. Under the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, and its predecessor the Conflict Pool, the Government has provided over £7million to PSVI projects and a further £2.9 million on peacebuilding initiatives. Additionally, projects that promote women's participation in political processes total over £2m this year. Across the 2016 programme all projects are gender sensitive, with direct action being taken to raise awareness of gender equality issues and promote the empowerment of women. These projects include support to local Human Rights Defenders, the Free Syrian Police, local councils, civil defence, media activists, civil society, education and agriculture programmes.

74. DFID's humanitarian programmes in Syria consider gender-related differences in needs, follow good practice and are sensitive to SGBV and the importance of women's participation. We also press all of our partners to include women in the development and implementation of all programmes we fund inside Syria. The Government believes the ring-fencing of funds can detract from these mainstreaming efforts.

➤ ***The Government should, when appropriate, put forward a candidate for election to the CEDAW Committee.***

75. The UK strongly supports the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). We have not, to date, nominated a UK candidate to the CEDAW Committee. UK nationals are currently represented on other UN treaty monitoring bodies, such as the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We judge that electoral success to another treaty monitoring body will be more difficult while we are represented on these and we therefore plan and manage our election resources accordingly. We will keep this situation under review and will reconsider our position when the next opportunity arises to nominate a candidate for election to the CEDAW Committee in 2018.

V. RESPONDING TO VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

76. The Government shares the Committee's view that addressing survivors' needs involves a broad range of interventions, including work to empower women and girls, change social norms, build political will and legal and institutional capacity, and provide comprehensive health care and other services. Our work on PSVI and SGBV reflects this holistic approach.

77. The Government recognises that access to justice is vital for victims and survivors of sexual violence. In addition to the training already delivered on the use of the International Protocol, we have also funded victim support units in policing and family friendly courts in a number of countries; "One Stop Shops" for survivors that bring together relevant service providers including police and prosecutors; and improvements to referral systems, legal reforms and survivor shelters in Malawi and Zambia. The Government works through a number of partners to provide safe and hygienic care to male and female sexual violence survivors. One of DFID's key partners in this area is the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) which offers medical care to survivors of sexual violence in situations of conflict, including essential post-rape care to both males and females. DFID has supported this work with a £4 million contribution.

78. The Government is of the view that in situations of armed conflict or occupation where the denial of an abortion would threaten the woman's or girl's life or cause unbearable suffering, the principles of International Humanitarian Law may justify offering an abortion rather than perpetuating what amounts to inhuman or degrading treatment. Clearly this will depend on the woman's choice, her condition and the safety and security of the humanitarian staff, as well as other contextual factors. DFID is in regular dialogue with USAID, State Department and US-based international NGOs with regard to improving access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, which includes reducing recourse to unsafe abortion and improving access to safe abortion services.

79. We have previously described our plans to tackle the stigma suffered by survivors of sexual violence in conflict and children born of rape, which frequently leaves them ostracised from their families and communities, excluded from support networks or employment opportunities and denied justice. We are developing the detail of our plans and have invited our Embassies and High Commissions in a number of conflict-affected and post-conflict countries to arrange country-specific workshops, involving representatives from government, NGOs, academics, faith groups and – importantly – local survivor networks. These will take place over the next few months to raise awareness of this issue and to develop an understanding of the challenges associated with stigma in each country. We plan to convene a meeting in London later in the year to bring together representatives from each of these workshops to identify the common trends and to produce policy recommendations for the international community, including the UN and donor countries, to inform future joint activity.

80. With regard to the Committee's specific recommendations under this chapter:

- ***Since rape and all other forms of sexual violence fracture personalities as well as bodies, learning frameworks should be encouraged to help reconstruct the lives of victims. An educational environment gives purpose, structure and hope; hence our recommendation that all victims, adults as well as children, should be drawn into a positive and gender-sensitive educational process.***

81. A significant proportion of the Government's work to support survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict is channelled through DFID's humanitarian assistance programmes. These address survivors' needs in a holistic way, through capacity building of services and engaging communities in a way that reinforces the protection of survivors of violence.

82. In line with DFID's humanitarian principles it is essential that services to survivors are freely accessible to those who wish to seek support. We know that the stigma and shame attached to sexual violence, including 'victim-blaming', can prevent survivors from accessing these available services. But we are careful not to enforce participation in programmes where this may inadvertently do harm. For example, targeted educational programmes could expose survivors of sexual violence to additional risk, increase stigma, and potentially re-traumatise survivors and/or communities. We maintain the view that access to all available services and support should be voluntary and through informed consent.

- ***The PSVI must ensure that policy and programmatic work responds in particular to the needs and experience of child victims of sexual violence in conflict. As part of the strategic plan for the PSVI that we are recommending, children's best interests should be prioritised. The PSVI must ensure that it respects the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which the UK was a sponsor and founding signatory.***

83. The Government agrees that particular attention should be paid to the needs and experiences of child victims. Indeed, since its launch we have sought to ensure that PSVI does so, by promoting and respecting children's rights in our work and by seeking to ensure that the best interests of the child are a primary concern in decisions that may affect them. As a result, the impact on sexual violence on children has been reflected throughout our policy making.

84. At the 2014 Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, we promoted the contribution of young people to tackling sexual violence through the Summit's youth meetings. We have provided funding to the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, whose mandate covers tackling sexual violence against children in conflict, as well as to NGO projects such as those to help children in Iraq access adequate and appropriate economic, legal, medical, psychosocial services and to provide "dignity kits" that help meet girls' immediate hygiene needs in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps in Somalia.

- ***On the situation in Syria, we recommend the Government pursues, in conjunction with the UN and the International Syrian Support Group, a plan to respond to those who have suffered sexual violence during the conflict. This strategy needs to deal with the repercussions of sexual violence against women, men and children. Its purpose should be threefold: to address the immediate medical and psychological needs of survivors; counter the stigma associated with such crimes; and mitigate against the long-term, cross-generational effects.***

85. The role of the International Syria Support Group is to facilitate a solution to the conflict and for members to use their influence to ensure parties in the conflict take specific steps that will build confidence towards this. These steps should include issues related to conflict-related sexual violence, such as the release of female detainees who are particularly vulnerable. We judge, however, that the office of the UN Special Representative for Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, is best placed to coordinate a UN response to sexual violence issues in Syria. Her office aims to publish later this year a strategy for the region which will include prevention, accountability and service provision. We look forward to discussing this strategy with her office and with like-minded colleagues.

- ***The Government should commission research into how effectively its policies and responses are meeting the needs of victims and survivors of sexual violence in conflict, as well as acting to counter stigma. This research should include evaluating how effectively policies and responses are meeting the needs of specific groups, such as men, children and LGBTI persons.***

86. The Government has invested heavily in building the evidence base for policy making on VAWG, including through DFID's "What Works to Prevent Violence" research and innovation programme. The effectiveness of our policy and programme responses are rigorously monitored and tracked throughout the programme lifecycle. For example, DFID's Creating Opportunities through Mentoring, Parental Involvement, and Safe Spaces programme will measure the impact of interventions on the resilience of adolescent girls and evaluate the reduction in their vulnerability to violence in fragile and conflict affected states. The Government is pleased that in giving an overall "green" rating for its VAWG learning review, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact recognised UK leadership, demonstrating the effectiveness of our policy and responses. With specific regard to the issue of sexual violence in conflict, the Government intends in the first instance to discuss the viability of such research with the Women, Peace and Security Centre at the London School of Economics.

87. The Government recognises that people who face discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, sexuality, disability, ethnicity or other characteristics can be more vulnerable to sexual violence and may experience its impact differently. We have sought to address this through a variety of DFID programming, including a broad portfolio of programmes that tackles violence against children, reaches more

disabled people, LGB&T people and ethnic minorities. DFID is also funding a major research programme on Sexuality, Poverty and Law at the Institute of Development Studies to look at legal reform, the rights of LGB&T people and others marginalised because of their sexuality. While it is not explicitly conflict-focussed, the programme will make an important contribution to the development of the global evidence base on violence against LGB&T people.

- ***We further recommend that the Government includes an independent evaluation of the support delivered to survivors by the PSVI and DfID in the annual report to Parliament that we have recommended. This should include significant input from local organisations, NGOs and activists. The evaluation should also consider the extent to which the support delivered to survivors is targeted at the needs of particular groups, such as men, children and LGBTI persons.***

88. While the Government does not agree with the Committee's recommendation to provide an annual report to Parliament, we do agree that evaluating survivor support programmes is important. For projects funded under the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund and other funding mechanisms, all implementers are required to provide reports on a quarterly basis as well as a project completion report which will be assessed by project managers. We also undertake detailed monitoring of high-value projects. DFID programmes are similarly monitored and reviewed, many based on their accompanying evaluation and research components. Lessons from these reviews inform future programming.

- ***The Government should give further attention to the particular circumstances of victims of conflict-related sexual violence among those claiming asylum in the UK.***
- ***We recommend that the Government expedite the process of implementing changes to the asylum screening process. The Government should outline the timetable for this. If necessary, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) should be provided with the necessary funding and resources to assist with implementation.***

89. The Home Office carefully considers all asylum claims on their individual merits and grants protection for those who genuinely need it, in accordance with our international obligations under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights. The Government is fully committed to treating all those who claim asylum with dignity and respect, including women and girls whose fear is based on gender related persecution, including victims of conflict-related sexual violence. In every asylum case the particular circumstances of the individual is considered in light of published country information, which covers issues relating specifically to gender, including sexual violence, the risk of female genital mutilation, the ability of national authorities to protect women and girls from such harm and provide effective redress and justice for those who suffer these crimes.

90. The Home Office already provides clear policy guidance to decision makers on how to consider asylum claims, including specific guidance on gender issues in asylum claims, which highlights issues relating to gender-based harm and requires

careful and sensitive consideration of such issues. Therefore, the Government believes that the asylum process already pays attention to the particular circumstances of conflict related sexual violence. Nevertheless, we intend to review consistently our policy guidance and training to ensure it remains appropriate for victims of conflict-related sexual violence.

91. The Government is committed to ensuring that women who have suffered sexual violence feel able to disclose that experience when making an asylum claim in the UK so that all those who face a real risk of persecution in their own country can be granted asylum without undue delay.

92. The Home Office has introduced a process for signposting women who may have been the victims of sexual violence to existing support services. Training has been developed with external partners and delivered to Screening Officers to enable them to identify better and respond more sensitively to sexual violence so that asylum seekers can be directed to the support they need. This training was delivered in April 2015. The Home Office is now exploring how relevant elements of the training can be incorporated into the mandatory Foundation Training Programme which is delivered to all asylum decision making staff. The Home Office will monitor this roll out as part of its commitment to ensuring the asylum process is gender sensitive and responsive to the needs of those who have suffered sexual violence in conflict.

93. In addition to the signposting work, the Home Office has worked with organisations such as the Refugee Council to develop a referral process so that women are formally referred to specialised counselling services when they disclose issues relating to sexual violence as part of their asylum claim.

➤ ***Unlike for refugees, the UN does not have responsibility for IDPs. We believe this to be a damaging distinction and that the Government should press for the UN to have responsibility for IDPs, as well as refugees. This could be achieved by extending the mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. At the very least, we believe that given the vulnerability of individuals in IDP camps to sexual violence, the Government should encourage the UN to revisit the need for it to take responsibility for those camps.***

94. As the Committee acknowledges, while the UN may be involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance to persons displaced within their own countries, the primary responsibility for such assistance as well as their wider protection lies with the State. The Government believes this is the most appropriate means of sharing responsibility for IDP's. The UN may, on a case by case basis, take responsibility for the management of IDP camps.

➤ ***We earlier recommended the need for international research on addressing the needs of victims and survivors. Such research should also examine what might be done to reintegrate victims and survivors of sexual violence—such as those who escape from violent non-state groups (VNSGs)—back into their communities. Dfid's 'What***

Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls' research and innovation programme could be an effective way of filling this research gap.

95. The Government agrees with the importance the Committee attaches to improving the international body of evidence-based research on these issues. The focus of DFID's What Works to Prevent Violence research and innovation programme is on primary prevention - stopping violence before it starts. The programme does, however, include some relevant studies on support to survivors. One component of this research is to understand the impact of Village Savings and Loans Associations on social functioning, mental health and the stigma suffered by survivors of VAWG. The research has also looked at the integration of risk mitigation measures for VAWG in the humanitarian response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. The programme is also conducting: research on the prevalence, forms and patterns of VAWG in South Sudan; an evaluation of the effectiveness of individual comprehensive case management in Dadaab, Kenya; and a comparative study on how to make peacebuilding and statebuilding processes more inclusive. We will make the results of this research publicly available when it is completed.

- ***We recommend that the Road Map for the Call to Action be used by the Government as a model when formulating a forward-looking strategic plan for the PSVI as recommended earlier.***
- ***In addition to campaigning for more states to adopt the Call to Action on Protecting Women and Girls in Emergencies at the WHS, the Government should ensure that the needs of men and boys who are victims of sexual violence in conflict are also addressed.***

96. The Government welcomes the Roadmap for the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Emergencies as well as the multi-stakeholder process through which it was developed. We agree with the Committee that it may provide a model for a future PSVI strategic plan, bearing in mind our earlier comments. The Roadmap includes a recommendation to "Establish specialized GBV services and programs that are accessible to anyone affected by GBV and are available from the onset of an emergency" as one of its objectives, outlining the importance of ensuring services are in place for both male and female survivors of SGBV.

- ***Since local and grassroots organisations are often the most effective in restoring the health and welfare of survivors of sexual violence in conflict, a review should be undertaken by the Government of the uses of emergency funding provided to local, regional and international NGOs in order to see what partnerships have proved most effective. New ways of working with local partners should be explored.***

97. Strengthening and providing funding to local grassroots organisations is essential to the Government's efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender based violence, especially in conflict and humanitarian contexts. Indeed, in crisis

situations, national and local organisations are often the first to respond, providing innovative and locally relevant interventions that can often have the greatest impact.

98. For this reason, DFID provides resources to the Start Fund where 50 per cent of funding goes to small scale local partners, specifically focused on filling a gap in the humanitarian sector. DFID is also providing £6 million over three years to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women - the only global multilateral grant-making mechanism dedicated to addressing these issues, specifically targeting smaller, local organisations. Ensuring funding reaches these organisations, with a view to reinforcing rather than replacing local and national capacities, is a core part of the Government's approach. These programmes will be monitored and reviewed. We will use the information to inform future programming.

➤ ***The Government should continue to make financial contributions to the GAI and encourage other states to do likewise.***

99. Through our role as a member of the Funding Board for the Global Acceleration Instrument (GAI), the Government intends to assess the impact and management of the GAI over the first year before taking a firm decision on continuing UK financial contributions. We are actively engaged at every stage of the GAI's development and liaise with other donors (Australia, Ireland and Spain) to ensure that the GAI's terms of reference meet our collective requirements and priorities. We look forward to the future development of the GAI and to seeing concrete results and delivery later in the year.

VI. ACCOUNTABILITY AND JUSTICE

100. The Government shares the Committee's assessment of the importance of documentation and evidence gathering. We welcome the Committee's support for the International Protocol and its contribution to evidence gathering to support future judicial processes. Since launching the International Protocol at the Global Summit in 2014, we have worked with governments, the judiciary, police, military and civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, DRC, Iraq and Nepal to provide training on the International Protocol, to help them gather evidence and bring prosecutions against perpetrators of sexual violence. We plan to provide further training in these countries as well as in Burma, Sri Lanka and Uganda over the coming months.

101. The International Protocol is already available in ten languages: Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian, Burmese, English, French, Kurdish, Serbian, Spanish and Swahili. We are considering further languages and will shortly add Lingala. We are determined that the International Protocol should make a real and practical difference to how we tackle sexual violence. It will not only boost the capacity of States to prosecute offenders and offer justice to victims but it also encourages human rights defenders and grass roots organisations to press for specific changes to domestic legislation, for example to improve the lives of survivors and of children born of rape.

102. As set out in the Government's written evidence, the PSVI Team of Experts (ToE) is part of the Government's wider Civilian Stabilisation Group, which was created to deploy expertise on conflict, stabilisation and security issues at short notice to conflict-affected states. The ToE currently consists of 74 experts (of which 43 are women), including police, lawyers, psychologists, doctors, forensic experts, gender-based violence experts and experts in the care and protection of survivors and witnesses.

103. Members of the ToE are recruited through fair and open competition. If successful, candidates are accepted onto the ToE roster. Roster members are then eligible to apply for deployments that are advertised to the ToE as and when they arise. The nature and length of the deployments depend upon the tasking requirements identified by the commissioning government department or Embassy. Some deployments are to deliver short-term specific activity, such as a training course on the International Protocol. Others are for a longer period, for example, the ongoing delivery of training to the Malian army via the EU Training Mission. Others are for a limited period but repeated regularly over an extended period of time, such as the documentation and evidence gathering on the Syrian borders.

104. Requests for ToE support have not outweighed its capacity. Since 2012 there have been 81 ToE deployments to 13 countries in support of 17 projects. At no point have we been unable to meet a request for ToE support. We would welcome additional requests for ToE support and are encouraging our Embassies and High Commissions to think more ambitiously and creatively about how they may use the ToE's expertise in developing their local PSVI policy and programming, including in work to address survivor stigma.

105. We agree with the Committee that remedies are an important element of justice for survivors of sexual violence and can form part of the recovery process. We welcome the Committee's recognition of our support to the landmark convictions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These rulings have paved the way for thousands of victims of rape in that war to claim compensation and have demonstrated to the perpetrators that time is no guarantee of impunity.

106. With regard to the Committee's specific recommendations under this chapter:

- ***We urge the Government to ensure the review process for the Protocol remains ongoing and agile to reflect improvements promptly. The review process must continue to incorporate feedback from users, including local organisations, NGOs and activists. Furthermore, it must be adequately resourced and be subject to a peer review process to ensure usability and up-to-date good practice.***
- ***The Protocol is a comprehensive and lengthy document. While we welcome the training materials and programmes the Government has already produced, we recommend that a short user manual be produced for operatives in the field.***

107. When we launched the International Protocol in June 2014 the Government stressed that it was, and is, intended to be a living document and would be updated as best practice evolved. We launched a revision process in January 2016. It is being undertaken in two phases. The first phase, which was completed in March 2016, involved a wide consultation exercise, gathering feedback from practitioners in countries where we have provided training on the Protocol.

108. This consultation process has provided us with a comprehensive set of recommendations which will form the basis for the second phase of the revision process. These include (i) restructuring the existing section on investigation to mirror the practical, chronological arc of the investigation process and to include additional language on analysing, submitting and disseminating evidence, (ii) including additional guidance on the specific context, challenges, techniques and training resources for interviewing and documenting conflict-related sexual violence against children and against men and boys, and (iii) developing the section on trauma to include specific guidance on vicarious trauma, both in terms of self-care strategies and the organisational protocols that must be in place to help those in the frontline of documentation and investigation. We will also use the next phase to explore ways to make the Protocol more user friendly, including options for its digitisation. We expect the revision process to be completed by December 2016, resulting in an updated version of the Protocol which will reflect user feedback.

109. We will ensure that practitioners are given further opportunities to provide feedback on future revisions.

- ***Peacekeeping and post-conflict work should incorporate a review of local legislation. For example, in countries where common law is***

practiced, the Bar Associations of both the UK and US could be asked to assist in this process.

110. The UK provides support to governments seeking to improve their legal codes, including on SGBV and related issues, in the form of technical advice and examples of best practice. To date, this has included advice on constitutions and criminal codes, training of judges and prosecutors, and providing legal assistance to sexual violence survivors. This work can be carried out by DFID, by a criminal justice advisor, or by a third party contractor, often a serving judge, Queen's Council, or barrister. These are areas of expertise for the ToE and members could be contracted to perform this work.

- ***We earlier recommended that the PSVI needs to establish a strategic plan and operational road map. The ToE needs to be incorporated into the delivery of this strategy. As we have mentioned elsewhere, the Government must heed its own assessment that mitigating and eliminating sexual violence in conflict is a long-term endeavour. The ToE therefore requires suitable funding and flexibility in deployments for re-engagements and longer-term support.***

111. The Government welcomes the Committee's acknowledgement that eliminating sexual violence in conflict is a long-term endeavour. This is why we have in place a series of multiyear policies and programmes to deliver this goal. The ToE will make a valuable contribution to this, including through longer-term deployments, such as that to Mali or the Syrian borders, depending upon need. It is important to note that the ToE does not require devoted funding because its deployments are funded by the commissioning departments.

- ***We further recommend the following with regard to the ToE:***
 - (a) ***That the Government should establish a formal process to make use of and disseminate the learning and experience generated by the members of the ToE;***
 - (b) ***That the knowledge and expertise of members of the ToE should be used earlier in the development of deployment policy;***

112. The Government agrees that capturing learning and experience is an essential part of policy making. Upon return from their deployment each expert currently provides feedback through the Stabilisation Unit's debriefing process on the tasking and their work to inform a post-deployment report. We agree that there is scope to strengthen this process and to involve ToE members more routinely in the design of taskings and wider policy consultations. We will explore options for doing so.

- (c) ***That it should be mandatory that all members of the ToE complete pre-deployment child safeguarding and protection training, including responding to sexual violence against men and boys; and***

113. To date, there have been no taskings which involve child safeguarding or protection elements. If there were, we would, of course, ensure that any member of the ToE deployed is appropriately trained. The cost of providing this training to all members of the ToE however needs to be balanced with expected demand. At present the Government does not believe it represents value for money or – importantly – would deliver a more effective ToE. Rather, we are currently looking to bolster the ToE with child protection experts. Expertise on men and boys issues already exists within the team. Should the need and demand arise we can provide training on these issues to further members of the ToE.

- (d) ***That the Government should work to expand the capacity of the ToE so that it can undertake more deployments and have greater flexibility as to the length and nature of these. We would like to see the UK partnering with other states (for example, states that are the ‘friends of the PSVI’) to expand the capacity of the ToE.***

114. As set out above, the Government has so far been able to meet demand for ToE support. The Government’s most recent review of the ToE’s capacity in 2014 did not identify a need to broaden the range of expertise within the ToE or increase its size. It is worth noting that in addition to the ToE, the Stabilisation Unit has a wider Civilian Stabilisation Group (CSG) roster of experts that cover a range of broader issues. The CSG includes a senior adviser cadre on gender, conflict and stability which can be used to supplement the ToE. The Government is committed to increasing the size of this cadre this year.

115. In 2014 we undertook a successful joint deployment with Canada to look at options for future PSVI activity in Iraq. We have also made the ToE available to the UN to support their work. The Government agrees that there may be options to expand this partnering and will consider this recommendation in more detail.

- ***Although this would not be practicable for all VNSGs, such as Daesh, the Government should extend further support to the work of Geneva Call. Where possible it could encourage other, similar initiatives.***

116. The Government remains determined that all perpetrators of acts of sexual violence in conflict should be held accountable and our capacity-building programmes, including training on the International Protocol, are clear about this. While there are legal and practical challenges in holding violent non-State groups (VNSGs) to account, these are not insurmountable and we will continue to work with others to drive forward the substantial progress made in this regard, including through the work of Geneva Call. We share the view that VNSGs are not a homogenous group and should not be treated as such. Our responses to VNSGs, including those who perpetrate acts of sexual violence, remain tailored to specific actors operating in specific contexts and are underpinned by extensive knowledge of them, this being gained from our own capabilities, as well as those of partners who, in some circumstances, have better access.

- ***We recommend that the government of Iraq should be encouraged either to ratify the Rome Statute or to invite the ICC to prosecute cases of***

sexual violence committed within Iraq's jurisdiction. We believe that the UK should use its influence to achieve this.

117. The Government encourages non-state parties to accede to the Rome Statute and will offer support to any State that is in the process of ratifying the Rome Statute or needs assistance in adopting the necessary national legislation to enact its full implementation. Iraq acceded to the Rome Statute in 2005, but withdrew its accession two weeks later. In December 2015 and May 2016 the EU Foreign Affairs Council called on the Government of Iraq to accede to the Rome Statute. The Government will continue to do so.

- ***We accept that, ultimately, it is for courts, not governments, to determine responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including sexual violence in conflict, torture and genocide that have allegedly been committed in Syria and Iraq. However, we believe that, so long as access to international jurisdictions such as the ICC is blocked, the Government should make it clear that, in its view, there is prima facie evidence that such crimes have been committed and that those who committed them must, in one way or another, be brought to justice.***

118. The Government has been very clear in its condemnation of Daesh atrocities against minorities and the majority Muslim population of Iraq and Syria. That is why we mandated the UN Human Rights Council to investigate Daesh's crimes in 2014, why we will do everything we can to gather evidence for use by judicial bodies, and why the Government has a comprehensive strategy to defeat Daesh and free people from its barbaric rule.

119. Whilst it is ultimately for the courts to determine individual criminal responsibility, we recognise that there is a growing body of evidence that terrible crimes have occurred. The UK is working with partners to do everything it can to ensure that the perpetrators are held to account. As Baroness Anelay told the House of Lords on 21 April 2016 "*We may not be the prosecutor, the judge or the jury, but we have a long memory, we have allies, and we are working with the Government of Iraq. We will not forget the perpetrators, and they will pay the price.*"

- ***In respect of Syria (and elsewhere), the Government should resist any peace settlement that sanctions or approves the use of amnesties for sexual violence in conflict, and ensure that there is an accountability mechanism to bring to justice all those that have perpetrated sexual violence in Syria. Any peace process needs to include the participation of women.***

120. In line with the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Government will "ensure that all peace, security and conflict mediation processes explicitly recognise the need to prevent, respond to and reduce crimes of sexual violence in conflict" and "...the need to exclude such crimes from amnesty provisions".

VII. SEXUAL VIOLENCE BY PEACEKEEPERS

121. As set out in the Strategic Security and Defence Review, the UK attaches great importance to UN Peace Operations. The Government is committed to working with partners to further strengthen the UN's capability to support global stability and to end conflict. In the UN Security Council, the UK promotes reforms that increase the efficiency and impact of UN engagement on conflict prevention and mediation, peace building and human rights.

122. Last September the Prime Minister committed to doubling the UK's military contribution to help ensure UN peacekeeping missions have the capabilities they need to fulfil their mandates. As a growing Troop Contributing Country (TCC) the Government has a responsibility to ensure that UK personnel perform to the very highest standard. But alongside our military support, the Government also wants to see critical reforms to the UN peacekeeping system. The UK has taken a leading role in supporting, and pressing for reforms, through the UN Secretary General's recent High Level Panel on Peacekeeping Operations.

123. Nowhere is change more urgent than on issues of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). Peacekeepers are vital in supporting fragile peace processes, including protecting civilians. But the reputation of peacekeepers risks being tarnished by the small number of peacekeepers who sexually exploit and abuse those they are meant to protect. The UN Secretary-General has rightly described SEA as "the cancer in our system". UN Member States must do everything to support his efforts to rid the UN system of SEA by UN personnel, including UN military, police and civilian staff. But it is not just the UN system that needs to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse. Making tangible progress on this issue will require commitment from the whole international community. All TCCs must take the same strong stance to eliminate SEA. There cannot be a culture of acceptance or impunity within contingents. Educating and training troops is an important component of preventing abuse, but it must be accompanied by firm leadership.

124. The Government commends the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the UN's response to SEA in the areas of prevention, enforcement and remedial action. This is an issue that has been allowed to fester for far too long. The Secretary General's appointment of Dr Jane Holl Lute as his Special Coordinator on Improving the UN's Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is a reflection of his determination on this issue. The Government has provided £200,000 to support her office and will reinforce this with consistent political support.

125. The Secretary-General has set a six month timeline for TCCs to investigate any allegations made against their troops. Each TCC with allegations made against it was published in the UN Secretary-General's 2016 annual report, detailing the number and status of allegations. Furthermore, the UN's Conduct and Discipline Unit now publishes all allegations of SEA, the offending State, and the status of the investigations. This is a major step towards transparency and accountability and one which the Government wholeheartedly supports. We have provided £555,000 to reinforce the ability of Conduct and Discipline Unit's critical work in this area.

126. The UK will further support the Secretary-General's agenda when we host the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in September. This will be chaired by the Secretary of State for Defence and will be attended by over 50 TCCs. One theme in discussions will be the performance of peacekeepers, including the need for a robust and clear approach to incidents of SEA by the UN system and TCCs.

127. The adoption of UNSCR 2272 on SEA by UN peacekeepers in March 2016 demonstrated the Security Council's determination to tackle the scourge of SEA. But progress will only be possible when the whole of the international community pulls together. The Government will continue to make strongly and urgently the case for it to do so.

128. With regard to the Committee's specific recommendations under this chapter:

- ***During the process of appointing a new UN Secretary General in 2016, the Government should support candidates who make ensuring prosecutions and accountability for SEA by peacekeepers a high priority.***

129. The UK wants to see a strong candidate selected as UN Secretary-General. Any successful candidate will need integrity, a proven track record, first class communication skills and suitable and relevant experience. They should be of unimpeachable character, have strong leadership skills and a bold vision for an activist UN at the heart of a rules-based international system. They should also be committed to transparency and accountability and cost-effective management and reform. Within that framework, tackling SEA must be a top priority as it undermines all the values for which the UN, and its leadership, stands.

- ***We recommend that the Government should work to have the 2006 report by the Group of Experts moved out of the General Assembly's Sixth (Legal) Committee and placed before the UN Security Council.***

130. The General Assembly's Sixth Committee has considered the "Report of the Group of Legal Experts on ensuring the accountability of United Nations staff and experts on mission with respect to criminal acts committed in peacekeeping operations" every year since 2006. The Government believes this is an important opportunity for all 193 UN Member States to consider these issues in detail and make recommendations for action to complement that of the Security Council. We also believe it is necessary that action to address SEA should be owned by the UN as a whole, not just the members of the Security Council. We do not, therefore, agree with the Committee's recommendation in this regard.

131. The Government notes the Committee's view that there has been lack of progress with respect to the 2006 Report. The Government agrees that more needs to be done to ensure the prevention of and accountability for sexual violence. The Government believes, however, that the General Assembly has taken useful action. Most recently through resolution A/RES/70/114 on Criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission, which has: helped promote the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy and provided appropriate training and vetting; pressed governments to establish appropriate domestic criminal jurisdiction over serious

crimes committed by their nationals while serving as UN officials and experts on mission; and called for more information on handling of cases referred to them. The Government will continue to call for further action on the criminal accountability of UN officials and experts, both for sexual violence and other crimes, at this year's session of the General Assembly's Sixth Committee.

- ***We welcome the decisions taken by the UN Security Council in Resolution 2272, not least the authority for the Secretary General to repatriate units where there is credible evidence of widespread or systemic sexual exploitation and to name the countries of alleged perpetrators. These could be important steps, so long as they are rigorously applied. However, we believe in addition that the establishment of an international tribunal "light" model as suggested in our evidence (paragraph 446) to ensure accountability for SEA by all peacekeepers (both military and non-military personnel) is now necessary and that the Government should pursue this option.***

132. The Government remains of the view that an international tribunal is unlikely to ensure accountability for SEA for all peacekeepers. It is unclear how such a court could be established or what its powers could be and we judge it very unlikely that all TCCs would voluntarily cooperate. If TCCs were mandated to cooperate through a UN Chapter VII Resolution, the Court would face legitimacy and practical questions about its location and composition. The Court's delivery of justice would likely be slow and remote, with little deterrent effect. It also removes responsibility from TCCs for action. This direct accountability is critical both when contingents are on active deployments and in subsequent legal and disciplinary processes.

133. Rather, the Government believes 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. The UK Government will continue to push for timely and thorough investigations to all allegations

- ***We would like to see the Government seeking :***

(a) Greater transparency with regards to the collection of data and reporting of allegations of SEA committed by all peacekeepers mandated by the UN and regional organisations. We welcome the publication in February 2016 of the nationalities of the alleged perpetrators of offences committed in 2015. Further transparency should now follow, not least information on action arising as a result of allegations against peacekeepers;

134. The Government agrees with the Committee on the importance of transparency on these issues. We welcomed the decision by the UN's Conduct and Discipline Unit to publish all allegations of SEA, the offending State and the status of the investigations. UNSCR 2272 endorses the Secretary-General's decision to repatriate contingents if appropriate steps are not taken to investigate allegations and/or if necessary steps have not been taken to hold perpetrators to account. The Government will press for such action to be implemented if necessary.

(b) A 'naming and shaming' policy for states who fail to carry out appropriate disciplinary measures and report on allegations of SEA;

135. Under UNSCR 2272, contingents alleged to have committed acts of SEA will be identified and replaced where such allegations are not dealt with effectively by the TCC. The Government supports this approach.

136. We would need to consider in detail any further policy to 'name and shame' troop or police contributing countries. We would not want a system that risked discouraging reporting or increased internal pressure to 'disprove' allegations in order to preserve a unit's or commander's reputation. We would also want to see a clear distinction between a failure to consider allegations of SEA and cases in which no further action being taken is the appropriate decision.

(c) Mandatory pre-deployment gender training for all peacekeepers. This should include monitoring and evaluation. Assistance in providing such training for troop contributing countries (TCCs) should be offered by the UK and other states;

137. The Government has repeatedly called for all peacekeepers to receive mandatory pre-deployment gender training. Responsibility for pre-deployment training rests with the TCC. Currently, there is no universal standard of training or a UN enforcement mechanism. The UN is developing a certification system for pre-deployment training in order to ensure a future minimum standard. The Government will continue to argue strongly that gender issues and sexual violence should be included within this, whilst also making the case for more substantive mandatory gender training in the longer-term.

(d) Deployment of gender advisors with child protection knowledge on all peacekeeping missions. The UK could lead by example by seeking the inclusion of gender advisors in its deployments to South Sudan and Somalia;

138. The Government has repeatedly called for the deployment of either gender advisors, women protection advisors or child protection advisors on all peacekeeping missions. We will continue to do so.

139. The Government is committed to ensuring that in the future, a gender advisor will be available to Commanding Officers on all UK missions overseas. To achieve this, the MOD is developing a cadre of gender advisors to support operations. We will deploy gender focal points to South Sudan and include gender capability in our deployment to Somalia.

(e) The restoration of the secondments of UK police personnel to UN police peacekeeping missions and ensure they are provided with gender training, with costs being met by central Government and not the police force directly;

140. The Government continues to provide policing support to UN peacekeeping operations. Since 2014 a team of British police officers has been supporting the development of community policing in South Sudan. British police officers have also

been deployed to the UN Mission in Liberia since 2015, helping to strengthen the management of crises and major incidents by the national police service.

141. In line with our commitment in the Strategic Defence and Security Review, the Government will continue to look for opportunities to place police officers and law enforcement experts in roles with the UN. We aim to deploy officers with the experience and specialised skills relevant for the position, including where they have specialist gender expertise. We will consider the provision of training for these officers.

(f) *The encouragement of a higher proportion of women in the composition of peacekeeping and civilian policing forces; this should be reflected in UK deployments to South Sudan and Somalia;*

142. The Government agrees that more women should be deployed in peacekeeping and civilian policing forces. As the MOD works both to increase the proportion of women in the ranks of the Armed Forces and to break down barriers to their advancement and to enable access to *all* roles, so the proportion of women which the UK deploys to UN missions will increase.

(g) *A review by the UN of its support for all rape victims and their families in conflict zones and ensure that this is effective and properly funded;*

143. Support for victims and their families of SEA by UN Peacekeepers is currently coordinated by UNICEF, operating alongside local NGOs and government services, where they exist. We agree with the Committee that it is important to ensure that these UN support services are being properly managed. We propose to invite the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator on Improving the UN's Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse to consider such a review as part of her mandate. The Government will also consider the merits of contributing to the Secretary-General's recently launched Trust Fund that provides support services to complainants, victims and children born as a result of SEA.

➤ ***For the new standards for UN peacekeeping to be applied by regional bodies that carry out peacekeeping operations, such as the African Union (AU), and ensure measures are taken to give effect to them.***

144. The Government agrees that consistency of conduct and discipline across all peacekeeping operations is important. We will continue to urge the African Union to ensure measures are put in place which reflect UN standards.

➤ ***The Government should use the opportunities presented by the forthcoming peacekeeping summit in London to share, discuss and promote the recommendations of this Committee's report.***

145. The UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial will be an important opportunity to discuss a range of pressing peacekeeping issues. This includes the implementation the pledges from President Obama's Summit last year, force generation and capabilities, standards and training, tackling poor performance and UN pre-deployment processes. It will also include a session on WPS and women in

peacekeeping. The Government expects that a number of issues raised by the Committee in this report will feature in discussions at the Ministerial. It will be helpful in these discussions to be able to make clear the importance that Parliament attaches to these issues.

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