

Universal Periodic Review – UK Statement
Ambassador Peter Gooderham 10 June 2008

- It is with great pleasure that I present the response to the recommendations made to the United Kingdom during its Universal Periodic Review on 10 April. These are available on the HRC extranet and are being distributed in the room.

- The United Kingdom Government has given serious consideration to every recommendation. It has used each one to re-examine its position on the issue in question, and to consider whether acceptance would improve and extend the delivery of human rights in the United Kingdom and in its Overseas Territories.

- I am pleased to say that the United Kingdom accepts the great majority of the recommendations either in full or in part. Where the United Kingdom feels unable to accept a recommendation at all, we have explained why – but this has been in a minority of cases. We have followed the practice that has evolved of amalgamating recommendations where one or more States have made recommendations of the same issue.

- I would like to thank those states who presented us with this set of challenges and opportunities. We believe they will have significant impacts in the development of human rights in our society for many years to come.

- We accept these challenges and opportunities gladly – but not lightly. On the contrary, we know that successful delivery will require sustained effort and political will. Sometimes it will mean a commitment to increased expenditure.

- Further development of human rights is seldom an easy or straightforward option for governments – especially when, as in the United Kingdom, it is necessary to protect public safety and national security, whilst ensuring full respect for human rights.
- However, the United Kingdom believes that endeavour is a vital test for good government. We see the development of human rights as the continuation of a process that has been going on in the UK for centuries, of which we are tremendously proud.
- The United Kingdom was delighted to have been amongst the first to be the subject of Universal Periodic Review, and to have had the opportunity of demonstrating its support for the UPR process and for the work of the Human Rights Council.
- Our approach has always been that UPR offers a genuine opportunity for States to take a serious, self-critical look at their own human rights records
- We took the challenge seriously. We did not avoid discussing areas which we find difficult. We also acknowledged areas where we felt there was room for further improvement.
- Mr President, I would like to say how much we appreciated the positive and supportive response we received from other states. The questions and recommendations presented to us were challenging but constructive.
- On behalf of our Government I would like to thank you, Mr President, for your skilful chairmanship of our session. And I would like to thank our troika partners – Egypt, Russia, and Bangladesh – for their work in guiding our review. We would also like to express our thanks for the reports by civil society and UN stakeholders which, along with the

national report, are important elements in providing a multifaceted picture of the real human rights situation in the United Kingdom.

- We look upon this stage of UPR as tremendously important. But this is just the beginning. We see the next round and future rounds as even more important. That is when we can hope to see definite signs that the enjoyment of human rights is a regular reality in people's lives everywhere in the world.

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- We would like to thank all the representatives of civil society that have taken the floor. We believe that civil society has an extremely important role to play in the UPR process. Several important issues have been raised. Many of these were mentioned by our Minister in his responses during the working group. We are fully committed to civil society involvement in the follow up of our review and look forward to discussing these points during civil society consultations in the UK.
- The United Kingdom is committed to implementing practical measures that, over the next four years, will lead to the successful delivery of the recommendations that we have accepted here today. In achieving that, the Government will continue to consult extensively with members of civil society, and will work with them in continuing to improve the delivery of human rights in the UK and in our Overseas Territories.

We will continue with our commitment to promote and protect human rights both at home and abroad. We recently published a new set of pledges and commitments to accompany our bid for re-election to the Human Rights Council this May. We pledged to work in partnership with the Human Rights Council to reinforce human rights at the heart of the UN; to continue to support UN bodies; to work for progress on human rights internationally; and to uphold the highest standards of human rights at home. We have delivered in the past, and we will deliver in future.