

# Speech: Presidency of Maduro no longer rests on democratic foundations

Mr President,

Thank you for convening this meeting.

There are probably only a few moments in history when a country's rate of inflation has to be measured in millions of percent. But in the case of Venezuela, this is such a moment. And beneath that stark statistic rests a scene of total economic collapse, and with it, a comprehensive picture of human misery and degradation from which only the corrupt Venezuelan elite are able to escape.

People are starving, children are malnourished, essential items are absent from the bare shelves of bankrupt stores. And from this wretchedness, millions have fled to seek refuge in neighbouring countries where they have been rescued by an outpouring of human generosity.

This inexcusable and wholly avoidable wasteland, Mr President, is entirely the creation of one man and his cronies.

The ranting socialism of Nicolas Maduro has destroyed an entire country and despite his self-congratulatory moral posturing, his enduring legacy will be to have made the poor, not just poorer, but destitute.

And it is our concern for the plight of Venezuela and the country's people that motivates us here today, not the sentiments of anything that can possibly be described as colonial. How indeed can any self-respecting government possibly justify supporting the poisonous regime of the nation-destroying Mr Maduro?

But, in addition to holding the opinion we do because of our concern for the people of Venezuela, this United Nations and we the Security Council are also here to resolve the world's worst sins. And to do so we must all uphold the rule of law which we firmly believe should govern the affairs of all.

And that rule of law has collapsed in Venezuela. Worse, it has been continuously eroded, undermined and eradicated by the dictatorial abuses of Nicolas Maduro.

Hand in hand with economic devastation, caused by this man, has come the parallel removal of liberty, justice and freedom.

We have seen the theft from the Venezuelan people of its very democracy. Maduro has attempted to delegitimise the National Assembly; he has created the artificial and illegitimate Constituent Assembly; and he has ruthlessly put an end to free and fair elections by stuffing ballot boxes and corrupting democratic decision.

The political opposition has been suppressed and intimidated, its leaders have fled or been imprisoned, and we will never forget that the opposition activist Fernando Alban, mentioned just now by Secretary Pompeo, was detained and then found dead beneath the windows of the National Intelligence facility.

The world can now see that the Presidency of Nicolas Maduro no longer rests on democratic foundations – the Presidency of Nicolas Maduro is not legitimate.

We the UK unreservedly praise and support the extraordinary courage of Juan Guaidó in his stand against Maduro's fraud, corruption and undemocratic status. We applaud Juan Guaidó's decision to assert the legitimate authority of the National Assembly.

Mr President, it is therefore right that we should now respond robustly to the courageous steps taken by the Venezuelan people and the political opposition by bringing this critical issue here to the Security Council. Council members must recognise their responsibility to ensure that the UN uses its leadership to help achieve positive change in Venezuela. Our efforts must now focus on finding a way out of the crisis that has devastated the country.

Mr President, let me make our position clear.

The UK stands with the EU in demanding urgent, free and fair elections at the earliest opportunity and in calling for a legitimate government to be established.

We stand with the Organisation of American States and we stand with the Lima Group, whose members last September referred the Venezuelan Government to the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity. Citing over 8000 extrajudicial executions, 12,000 arbitrary arrests, and the detention of 13,000 political prisoners, they made history by making it the first ever case in which an entire state has been referred to the ICC.

Mr President, we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States in saying that the National Assembly and its President, Mr Juan Guaidó, are best placed to lead Venezuela to the restoration of its democracy, its economy and its freedom.

Therefore we believe that Juan Guaidó is the right man to take Venezuela forward and we will recognise him as constitutional interim President if new elections are not announced within 8 days.

We should today all stand together against the tyranny of Nicolas Maduro and in support of legitimate democratic forces in Venezuela. Venezuela can and must recover from the depths of its current despair. To do so it needs an end to tyranny, an end to corruption, and an urgent return to freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

This Security Council must make its view clear and we must urgently help pave the way to a brighter future for the Venezuela which Maduro has so culpably

ruined.

Thank you.

---

## Speech: Amanda Spielman at the 'Wonder Years' curriculum conference

It's a real pleasure to be here today at the delightfully titled 'Wonder Years' conference. I'm also pleased to be here and able to talk to you all so soon after we've published the [draft new Education Inspection Framework](#).

Some of you might have taken a look at our proposals – the download stats tell me quite a lot of you probably have – and you may already have fired off your thoughts. If not, you've still got another 10 weeks to do it.

And I said when I launched them, this is a genuine listening exercise. I want your collective wisdom and expertise to help us make what I think are already a strong set of proposals even better.

And for me, the new framework really is about making sure that children's time in education are their wonder years. The time when they get to grips with the power and flexibility of the English language and the fundamental mathematical concepts, when they learn about the scientific principles that shape the world around them and the universe, and the events that have forged history.

It should also be the time that children discover the possibilities of foreign languages, develop an appreciation of music and the arts, as well as the rudiments of some principles and practice of design and technology. Those opportunities should be a basic expectation for all children during their school and college years. And that, more than anything else, is why we've designed a framework that rewards those who deliver them.

Put another way, a high-quality education, built around a rich curriculum, is a matter of social justice. We know that those who are born in more advantaged circumstances get a major head start in life. All of you know the much-cited findings about language disadvantage for children from poorer families. Time in nursery and primary school is the best opportunity to tip the playing field back towards the level. That is why we have stressed, in the [draft schools handbook](#), the importance of reading to young children frequently, and of introducing new vocabulary in contexts that stimulate their understanding and thinking.

But the role of education in delivering social justice doesn't stop at the beginning of children's education. We know from our curriculum research that it is disadvantaged pupils who are disproportionately affected by the

narrowing of key stage 2 and the shortening of key stage 3, or who in various ways become less likely to take more academic subjects in key stage 4.

And though this is on the face of it plainly wrong, I understand why it happens. If you're a school in a challenging area, and you feel that outcomes data is the sole proxy for measuring the quality of what you do, your job inevitably becomes oriented towards finding the best way to secure those grades and in turn those performance tables points. Especially when you face the double whammy of an intake that starts some way behind, and the difficulty of recruiting teachers to some of our most deprived towns.

But the consequence of this narrowing is that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds do lose out on building that body of knowledge that should be every child's entitlement. For that reason, if we really want to reduce economic and social inequality, the place to start is what is taught in the classroom.

That isn't a personal prejudice of mine, but has been well demonstrated. For example, I've mentioned before Cristina Iannelli's finding – that most of the advantage associated with attending a selective school is accounted for by the curriculum studied there, and in particular the greater likelihood of taking the core academic subjects. And this doesn't just apply to economic disadvantage either.

Serious attention to curriculum is just as important for the children with special needs and disabilities. One of the occasional frustrations I have when it comes to children with special needs, is that we sometimes seem to forget that as well as having particular needs, they are still children. A child with severe or complex needs may well take longer to acquire and build that knowledge than other children.

But that doesn't mean we should assume it is irrelevant for them, or limit our efforts to help them achieve it. For children with SEND, the decisions that leaders make about the curriculum make a huge difference. They can't afford for leaders to get it wrong. Even more than other children, they haven't got the time for leaders to get it wrong.

## **Quality of education**

Many of you will have seen that our [draft handbooks](#) talk about the importance of developing cultural capital. I know this can be a contested phrase.

But to spell out what that looks like in practice for Ofsted, it means our inspectors will consider how schools are equipping pupils with the essential knowledge they need to be educated citizens: how they are introduced to the best that has been thought and said, and how they are helped to a real appreciation of human creativity and achievement.

At the same time, I know that given PTE's strong focus on standards, some of you have worried that removing the outcomes judgement might allow schools to take their foot off the pedal when it comes to attainment. But nothing could be further from the truth. Outcomes have not become irrelevant or unimportant

to Ofsted. Try telling any teenager that their GCSEs don't matter, or telling parents that we shouldn't care how well their children do in reading tests at age 11.

Schools should be held to account for how well their pupils achieve and that will not change. What this framework does, however, is to make sure that outcomes are considered in their proper context, to understand whether they have been achieved in a way that sets young people up to succeed in further study and life beyond, rather than just to pass a particular set of exams.

Again, I believe that is how we will not only level the playing field for the most disadvantaged, but also how we make sure that we drive forward the real standards agenda.

And I am also fairly sure, to return to the 'Wonder Years' title, that the way to kill a real love of knowledge and learning is to give children 12 years of jumping through mark scheme hoops, with some nods towards developing some desirable but ill-defined skills thrown in alongside. If we really want to develop all children's intellects and curiosity, they need to be taught the right, connected knowledge about Shakespeare, about the Battle of Trafalgar, and about the structure of the cell – that will pique their interests and passions!

## Concepts and accessibility

The audience here is full of people I very much admire and respect. Many of you – speakers and audience – have been part of the fascinating recent discussions, such as those about substantive and disciplinary knowledge, which I am sure will get plenty of airing today. But, and I hope you won't mind me saying this, it is probably fair to say that your levels of interest in education research and theory are probably not entirely representative of the teaching profession as a whole.

Which is why, in order to be successful under these draft proposals, we are not expecting every head to become an expert on Michael Young or Daniel Willingham, or to match the erudition that you will hear from many speakers today. Our evaluation of the quality of a school's curriculum will reflect the quality of their practice, rather than their ability to use the 'right' curriculum language. Indeed we have also shown, through the [third phase of our curriculum research](#), that we can quite quickly distinguish between those who have a genuinely good curriculum, implemented well across a school, and those who simply talk a good game.

To demystify the proposed new process we have tried to make our language and definitions in the handbook as straightforward as possible. Alongside the handbook, Sean Harford, our National Director of Education, has also put out a special edition of the [school inspection update \(SIU\)](#) that gives some further clarification and definition in the schools context – remember, the main framework covers everything from childminders through to adult education.

That update explains that when it comes to learning, we have used the

definition from cognitive psychology, as a change in long-term memory. So “if nothing has altered in long-term memory, nothing has been learned”. That leads to our understanding of progress as knowing more and remembering more. The connections between knowledge give rise to understanding, and as pupils develop unconscious competence and fluency, this will allow them to develop skills, ie the capacity to perform complex operations, drawing on what is known.

We also know that we learn by relating new knowledge to what we already know. Therefore, the more pupils know, the more they have the capacity to learn.

This won't be new to you, and I hope that the clarifications in that update help to put to bed any suggestion that we are asking too much of teachers. Alongside the SIU we have also put out a [series of curriculum videos](#), further explaining our thinking – but if you think there is more we can do to shed light on the process, please do let us know.

## **Diversity**

I also want to address another worry that I have heard being expressed around curriculum diversity. Some of the people here are at the forefront of innovative curriculum design in your schools. To that I say, all power to you. This draft framework is absolutely not about trying to put a straitjacket on innovation in schools' curriculum or to impose an Ofsted model.

Instead we are using the statutory expectation of a broad and balanced curriculum and the national curriculum, which all maintained schools are expected to follow, and which academies are expected to match in ambition, as our baseline. So long as schools achieve that, they are free to design and build their curriculum as they see fit, and Ofsted will reward the curricula that demonstrate thought and care about how to build rich and deep learning. Similarly for those who want to adopt existing designs, textbooks or other products that work well, that is equally fine and very often to be encouraged.

## **Breadth**

That concept of breadth will necessarily mean different things at different stages of young people's education. We've been clear in the handbook, for instance, that the priority for key stage 1 is for children to master early reading and mathematics. Otherwise so much of what comes later will be inaccessible.

For that reason, and building on what we've learned through our 'reading champion' programme of inspections over the past year, inspectors will be looking at the extent to which pupils in key stage 1 learn to decode text through systematic synthetic phonics and whether they develop into fluent confident readers.

Similarly in early mathematics, inspectors will be looking at whether primary

schools have considered the sequence in which mathematical concepts are taught and whether there are opportunities for recall of facts, concepts and procedures, which should lead, for example, to automatic recall of number bonds for addition and subtraction, and of times tables.

I want to be clear: no school will be criticised by inspectors for focusing its key stage 1 curriculum on literacy and mathematics. But that said, equally no school will be criticised for providing greater breadth: primary schools are best placed to know what it takes to get their children reading early, expand their vocabulary and to put in place the fundamentals of maths.

As children move through primary school, we will expect to see that focus on the fundamentals maintained, but that should be alongside broader learning across all the foundation subjects. These are subjects which we know, from our inspections and curriculum research, are too often being squeezed in many primary schools. Of course the statutory tests remain important, but here again, our inspectors will be looking to see that children's performance in English and maths is achieved through proper teaching, practice and reading, rather than simply learning how to sit SATs papers. That, after all, is what will set them up properly to succeed in secondary school.

And when it comes to secondary school, that rich breadth of curriculum should continue. For almost all children, there is no reason to start narrowing down their learning before the age of 14. It really does pain me to think about how many potential historians, artists, linguists, musicians and designers we've lost because we made them drop subjects almost before they'd begun, so they may never have discovered their talents in them.

Now that does not mean that Ofsted believes that there is only one approach to structuring key stages 3 and 4. There may well be a good rationale for starting some GCSE content in year 9, especially in linear, core subjects, or because it offers pupils the opportunity to study a broader curriculum right through year 7 to year 11.

Where our concerns arise is when the desire to start teaching GCSE content early either comes at the expense of a broad and rich curriculum, or when it is used as an excuse to dedicate excessive time to drilling exam technique at the expense of the learning of new knowledge.

## **Knowledge versus skills**

This is also probably the right place for me to address the vexed arguments about whether teaching of knowledge sits in opposition to teaching skills.

From a pragmatic inspection point of view, opposition between knowledge and skills is unnecessary. Yes, we want to see pupils being taught powerful knowledge, but it is also clearly essential for pupils to develop skills. We consider a skill to be the capacity to perform, whether cognitively or physically, drawing on what is known, and the new framework directs inspectors to consider what schools are doing to develop both pupils' knowledge and skills.

That is why we want pupils to be able to analyse, evaluate and solve problems using what they have learned. And there are clearly desirable physical skills and capabilities that develop in the sports, arts and also technical and vocational capabilities.

What the evidence does show, however, is that these skills are largely domain-specific – evaluation of evidence in science is not the same as evaluation of evidence in history; being creative in dance is not the same as being creative in mathematics. And we would expect schools' approaches to curriculum design to reflect this.

## **EBacc**

In a similar way we have made it equally clear that knowledge must not be reduced to or confused with simply memorising facts. A pub quiz is not a curriculum.

Nor, and I hope we've made this clear by now, is a curriculum simply a list of subjects to be studied. Which is why I disagree with those who claim that references to the EBacc in the new inspection framework represent Ofsted dictating the curriculum. They do not.

The government has decided that its ambition is for the EBacc subjects to be studied by the vast majority of young people up to the age of 16. It is an ambition I support.

In almost every other OECD country, young people study an academic core that includes their home language, maths, science, a foreign language (most often English) and a humanity up to the age of 16, if not 18. We also know that the very wide latitude given to both schools and pupils in England came to mean too many students, particularly disadvantaged and lower-attaining pupils, giving up core academic subjects at a startlingly early age.

Even when, as I have said before, getting a grade 3 in history GCSE may ultimately prove more beneficial than a Merit in a BTEC. I also happen to think that if you were to ask the proverbial woman on the street whether young people should study these 5 subjects up until 16, most would be shocked to find out that this is not already a requirement.

So the draft new inspection framework proposes that we will be looking at the extent to which schools are working to increase EBacc uptake. What that does not mean is that we will expect every school to be at the same stage, or even to be heading towards the same end point in terms of EBacc entries.

The government has been very clear that the 75% and then 90% targets map out the national expected picture, not requirements for every single school. Schools in disadvantaged areas will be starting from a lower base, and many will have struggled with recruitment, especially when it comes to modern foreign languages – our inspectors will take account of this. In the same vein, they are likely to look unfavourably on a leafy grammar that is not already securing high levels of uptake in these subjects.

So yes, we will be playing our part, as required under statute, to support government policy, but we will not be applying a blunt instrument to do so.

## **Consultants**

And that means I do not want to see schools rushing to quick solutions – such as hiring consultants to help them prepare in some way for the new framework. No school should have to spend a single penny on consultants to prepare for it.

That is why we have put out so much explanatory material, and why we continue to run events on the proposals across the country. You already have enough demands on tighter budgets without the supposed necessity of preparing for a new Ofsted framework adding more.

I hope you will agree, that we have been consistent over the past 4 years in communicating the message that inspection is not a hoop-jumping exercise.

I was pleased to see from our latest polling of teachers that our myth-busting campaigns have reached so many of you. That will continue with this new framework.

In fact, I strongly believe that by focusing on the substance, rather than performance metrics, we have created something which is far less gameable by supposed inspection experts than any framework which has come before it.

My hope is that once embedded, this framework will help to sound the death knell of a school improvement industry that has too often pushed approaches to improvement that are designed to push results without necessarily making any improvement to real standards. If anyone tries to sell you the 'Ofsted inspection curriculum' I hope that you will – politely – tell them where to go.

## **Conclusion**

I want to leave some time to get to your questions, so all that remains is for me to thank you for inviting me here today, and to thank all of you who have already played a part in shaping the draft framework.

As I started by saying, I hope that many more of you will send us your thoughts in the weeks to come, so that we really can make sure that every child's years in nursery, school and colleges really are their wonder years. Thank you.

---

# [Press release: Foreign Office Minister visits Poland](#)

FCO Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field visited Poland on 24-25 January to follow up on the 3rd annual UK-Poland Inter-Governmental Consultations, held in London in December.

The visit also follows the recent COP24 climate conference in Katowice last month, which Minister Field attended, and allowed for an exchange of views on key issues across the Asia-Pacific region, as well as further strengthening of relations between the UK and Poland.

While in Poland Minister Field met key Polish figures including Deputy Foreign Minister Maciej Lang, Deputy Minister for the Environment Sławomir Mazurek and Minister for Strategic Energy Infrastructure Piotr Naimski.

Minister for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field said:

It is evident that relations between the United Kingdom and Poland are as strong as ever, with a huge amount of bilateral work taking place between our two countries. We continued discussions on important joint initiatives such as our clean growth partnership, much of which resulted from the hugely productive Inter-Governmental Consultations, which the Prime Minister hosted in London in December.

Ours is a very fruitful partnership, and that is why it is important for me to be back in Poland so soon after my last visit in December for COP24 in Katowice. The UK and Poland have a long shared history and we continue to work closely together on some of the most pressing issues facing our two countries, including through NATO and the UN Security Council.

The Minister also met representatives of UK and Polish businesses working in green technology and energy.

## **Further information**

---

## [Speech: Climate change as a security](#)

# risk

Mr. President, first of all may I join the thanks in thanking you for scheduling this debate today and indeed, giving this Council the opportunity to further consider the threat posed to international peace and security by climate change. Dominican Republic's own experience has encouraged you to be a powerful advocate for this issue and a leader in this field. And I'm sure I speak for all that we look forward to your remarks later in the debate.

I also wish to thank all the briefers. But I was particularly struck by the contribution of Lindsay Getschel- by drawing attention to the challenge of climate change, by the importance of consideration of the youth. All countries should not just acknowledge that we should engage youth, we should involve youth in finding the solutions. And certainly Lindsay, from my government's perspective and I'm sure I speak for many in this room and beyond, I certainly give that commitment because it is important we work together to find common solutions and the youth have an important role to play.

This is also an incredibly important issue for the United Kingdom. Indeed we were the first country to raise this issue on the Council back in 2007. We are particularly concerned for Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, including almost 60% of our fellow Commonwealth members which face an existential threat from climate change and associated natural disasters.

Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo mentioned the devastation of Hurricane Irma in 2017. I too visited the Caribbean in the wake of Hurricane Irma where both the devastation but more importantly the determination of the people left a deep and lasting impression on me.

Our Prime Minister Mrs May has said there is a clear moral imperative for developed economies to help those who stand to lose most from the consequences of man-made climate change Through our International Climate Finance Fund, we are supporting cleaner economic growth and have helped over 21 million people prepare for the risk of increased droughts and floods. Between 2016 and 2020, we pledged to provide at least 7 billion dollars of funding to the fund and we aim for a balance in our adaptation and mitigation spend.

We have also sought to strengthen our work within the Caribbean region to build resilience through bringing together resources, capabilities, assets and expertise to show a collaborative and strengthened response to the challenge posed by extreme weather events.

Mr President, we all acknowledge climate change is not an abstract theoretical risk. It is real. it is happening now. Severe weather events that used to happen "once in a century" now occur two or three times a decade. Sometimes more often. They impact on essential resources, and drive people from their homes. They threaten sustainable development, including our

ability to meet the SDGs, and trade. And they exacerbate conflict and instability.

Indeed the situation is much graver than previously thought. Research by the UK's Independent Climate Change Committee in collaboration with the China Expert Panel on Climate recently concluded that we have significantly underestimated the social and indeed the economic risk from climate change.

And of course this risk threatens us all. So it's important we must all contribute to the solution including through discussions such as the important one we are having now.

In Paris in 2015 the international community rallied together to find a shared solution to this shared problem. As the British Prime Minister has said, the Paris Agreement is a vital pillar of the rules-based international system. Now we must accelerate global action to meet the commitments we have made. And we must heed the IPCC's call to increase our ambition. This includes through our existing partnerships. For example last April, the Commonwealth Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris Agreement and pursuing efforts to limit the increase in global average temperatures to 1.5 degrees celsius above pre-industrial levels and I to pay tribute to Poland's leadership at the COP 24.

In that vein, we commend strongly the Secretary General's efforts to refocus the United Nations on the urgent need to address climate change. In our view the UN needs to enhance its approach to climate security in three important ways.

First, on information sharing: we must make better use of the climate-risk data available in the private sector and indeed importantly, in civil society; and we must integrate that data into decision making, right across the UN system.

Secondly, we need to consider all risks, and that includes climate-related risks and in a holistic way and when planning and implementing solutions to peace and security issues.

And as mentioned by the Foreign Minister of Germany Heiko Maas, the Council has started to reflect on this in recent resolutions, particularly. I agree with him on the issue of Lake Chad, Somalia, the Sahel, Mali and Darfur.

Of course, the task now is to have effective implementation and integration into our development, peacebuilding, and humanitarian work. The UK welcomes the piloting of a mini-mechanism to ensure information is available to UN reporting, but it should explore ways to go further for example by improving the coordination and integration of UN Agencies and Missions that manage climate-related security risks on the ground.

Finally Mr President, we must invest in resilience. The UK will lead efforts on resilience ahead of the Secretary-General's Climate Summit this year, collaborating with a range of actors, to launch what we hope to be genuinely transformational actions.

And again Lindsey I say to you, your suggestions I'm sure have caused us all to reflect. And again from a Commonwealth perspective, I have the opportunity to host Youth Ambassadors from the Commonwealth in London next week and I will certainly be reflecting very strongly on your suggestions and recommendations.

Mr President, in economic terms alone this makes sense. Investing in preparedness to respond will on average halve, yes that's halve, the cost of deploying humanitarian aid in the wake of a disaster. And it can also speed up crisis response by up to two weeks.

Resilience also presents a huge opportunity to support employment, spread prosperity which of course accelerates development and ultimately, enhances security.

Through the UK -led Centre for Global Disaster Protection. We are working with developing countries to increase their preparedness and indeed resilience to climate change and natural disasters.

Mr President in conclusion, there is no doubt that climate-related security challenges are real. They are here. They are now. We must work together to ensure the United Nations system is able to holistically consider climate risks in decision making and most importantly, integrate them into mission planning and ultimately, into implementation.

Thank you.

---

## **Speech: Working with civil society to promote the Women, Peace and Security agenda**

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon and welcome. I'm delighted that we're working very closely with many in this room. But in hosting this event today, in particular, paying tribute to our close cooperation with both Germany and Peru and colleagues across the world on the important agenda of Women, Peace and Security both through the informal Experts Group and in the Security Council. So it's an immense pleasure to be co-hosting this Arria meeting today. And thank you, Foreign Minister, for your introductory remarks.

As we've heard from the Foreign Minister, next year will mark the 20th anniversary of when the UN Security Council resolution 1325 was passed. It was a landmark resolution. It set the course for the agenda that we all meet for today on Women, Peace and Security at the UN. If 1325 sets out the destination, then the national action plans are the means of getting there –

providing country specific, tangible strategies that can drive public and political action, and drive the important priority of gender equality and most importantly lasting peace. In countries suffering the effects of unresolved conflicts, the voices of women can make a real difference. Actually let's change that. They do make a real difference. Survivors and grassroots organisations need to be allowed better connections with national politics and to be able to contribute directly to building peace. That cannot in any sense be ignored.

Five years ago, your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen there was not a single National Action Plan in the MENA region. Today we can reflect and I am pleased to say there are four: in Iraq, in Jordan, in Tunisia and in the occupied Palestinian territories. And they will soon be joined by Lebanon. However the unresolved conflicts across the MENA region continue to demonstrate the chronic challenges of implementing the WPS agenda in conflict settings. As we heard from Heiko, we have a humanitarian crisis in the MENA region. We can look to Yemen's protracted conflict and Syria. Absence of political stability in Libya and yes the legacy of the awful legacy of Daesh atrocities in Iraq. I also visited Mosul. I visited Iraq together with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Pramila Patten and went to Mosul and heard first-hand about the suffering of minority communities – particularly Christians and the Yazidis. And I had the honour last week to host Nadia Murad in London, where I heard directly about the sterling work she was doing. And not only having endured the atrocities of this despicable organization -that hijacks a noble faith- Daesh, not just surviving it but then having the courage to become an advocate. And I am sure we all recognise and pay tribute to her efforts which were rightly recognised through the award of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Your Excellencies, when we look at what's happening across the MENA region – directly or indirectly increase sexual and gender based violence. We've seen that it disproportionately affects women and girls and it creates barriers to their full participation. Therefore National Action Plans need to address the diversity of the countries and the regions they serve. Understanding the immense complexities and most importantly addressing these challenges. Under our own National Action Plan, the United Kingdom has prioritised support to key countries including Iraq, Syria and Libya. And implementing these National Action Plans requires a threefold approach. The first: is state level support and we are pleased to be funding UN Women to support the implementation of the Jordanian National Action Plan through our Conflict, Stability and Security fund. The government endorsed plan will integrate a gender based approach towards women's participation in prevention and protection processes as well as importantly in peace building. The second aspect, again as the Foreign Minister mentioned, is civil society. Women-led groups are at the forefront of efforts to build peace across the MENA region, and they must be rightly recognised but also importantly they must be protected. That is why we are helping to build the capacity of civil society organisations in Iraq through the Women's Peace and humanitarian fund and have also supported women's organizations in Libya and indeed in Yemen.

The final crucial aspect relates to the international community – that is all

of us. Our collective, collaborative shared responsibility to provide technical, financial and logistical support to governments and civil society organisations, in order to achieve our shared vision and goals on inclusivity on the agenda that is women peace and security. For our part, the United Kingdom pledges to continue to support this agenda in every which way we can, including through our own National Action Plan. In the Security Council, we must do more to ensure the existing Women, Peace and Security framework is further implemented more meaningfully. The informal Experts Group is an important forum to monitor and indeed encourage implementation but we must also continue to hear directly from civil society briefers, from the United Nations who can illustrate progress and most importantly highlight areas where we must continue to apply our collective efforts and support.

In conclusion and mindful once again of next year's anniversary, I urge all of us together today to join in implementing and developing further National Action Plans in full consultation with our civil society partners. So that together we support others to implement theirs. And together we can strengthen our resolve in promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda in all our work – in both conflict and stability and in building peace. Thank you.