

UN Human Rights Council 43: Item 4 General Debate

Thank you, Madam President,

We remain deeply concerned about China's systematic human rights violations in Xinjiang, which UN experts have said is incompatible with China's international human rights obligations. Credible and growing reports of forced labour heighten our concern. China should allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and her Office immediate and unfettered access.

Russia must uphold the human rights of all its people, throughout the Russian Federation and in Chechnya, including the right to a fair trial, and the prohibition on torture and Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment. We remain deeply concerned about human rights violations by Russian de-facto authorities in illegally annexed Crimea.

We call upon Egypt to improve prison conditions, in line with Committee Against Torture recommendations, and to lift restrictions on civil society, including by releasing all those detained for exercising their constitutional right to freedom of expression.

The situation in Venezuela, as documented in the July 2019 OHCHR report, is deeply concerning. We call for respect for the National Assembly, the restoration of democracy, and the release of all political prisoners.

The United Kingdom would like to refer to interventions elsewhere on Myanmar, Syria, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, and Burundi.

Thank you, Madam President.

Marine charity benefits by £61,966 from Enforcement Undertaking

A donation of £61,966 to a marine charity has been made after a car parts company failed to register as a producer of waste packaging.

The financial contribution to Sea Life Trust is part of an Enforcement Undertaking (EU) offered to the Environment Agency by the German, Swedish and French Car Parts Ltd (GSF) of Fort Industrial Park, Dunlop Way, Birmingham.

The company submitted a proactive EU to the Environment Agency in November 2017; GSF company had not registered as a producer of waste packaging between

2002 and 2016 due to ignorance of the Packaging Regulations.

Company officials said they were unaware they had to register under the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997 and 2007.

These regulations ensure packaging materials such as cardboard, plastics and glass are recycled and do not end up in landfill.

Companies with a turnover of £2 million or more and handle more than 50 tonnes of packaging per year must ensure a certain percentage is recycled.

They do this by registering with a packaging scheme or directly with the Environment Agency and provide evidence its packaging waste has been dealt with correctly.

The money will be used by the charity to support education initiatives and clean-up events.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said:

Enforcement Undertakings allow polluters to positively address and restore any harm caused to the environment and prevent repeat incidents.

The Environment Agency is increasingly using this method of enforcement for suitable cases to restore the environment, improve practices of the offending company and avoid longer criminal court cases.

Please report any environmental issues to the Environment Agency's 24 hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Andy Bool, Head of the Sea Life Trust, said:

This Environment Undertaking has been used to help facilitate our education initiatives, as well as deliver clean-up events to remove harmful litter from our coastlines and waterways in the UK to help protect our oceans and amazing marine life.

93rd session of the Executive Council of the OPCW

Thank you Chair. The UK agrees with the statement made by the Croatian Ambassador on behalf of the EU.

It is almost exactly two years since the UK suffered a chemical weapon attack in Salisbury. As part of our collective response to this flagrant breach of the Convention, we agreed at the November Conference of States Parties to list the agent used in that attack on the Chemical Weapons Convention schedules. This was an important step, and a testament to the relevance of the CWC and of this organisation.

There is still more work to do. The use of chemical weapons in Syria remains a significant threat. Once again, the Council has been presented with a report that demonstrates Syria has made no progress in resolving the outstanding inconsistencies in their declaration. Discrepancies and gaps remained unexplained. This is serious and it is unacceptable. Syria has failed to show that they have fully declared and destroyed their chemical weapons programme.

We expect in the coming weeks to receive the first report of the Investigation and Identification Team, which is a key element in ensuring that those who use chemical weapons cannot do so with impunity. We recognise and welcome the professionalism with which the IIT, DAT, and FFM conduct their important work in often very challenging circumstances.

The Director-General's briefing on 6 February once again clearly set out the high standards involved in the Technical Secretariat's work. I'd like to thank the Director-General for this comprehensive briefing on the independent investigation into the leaking of confidential information. This is an important issue for all States Parties and we welcome the thoroughness of the investigation and its clear findings. States Parties should support the OPCW against unwarranted and unfounded attacks on its integrity and its professionalism.

Mr Chair,

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassadors Puja and Gomez for their report and their sterling work in taking forward the facilitations on organisational governance issues. There have been some really positive and constructive exchanges and ideas. We clearly have some areas of common agreement – for example on the drive for increased geographical diversity and gender balance within the Technical Secretariat. I hope this is something we can all support.

On the subject of organisational issues, I will also just make a plea for all States Parties to pay their assessed contributions in good time. At the end of last year only 92% of payments had been received, down 4% on the previous

year. We all have a responsibility to meet our commitments in support of the organisation. Timely payment of assessed contributions is essential for a sound financial footing and to ensure the Technical Secretariat can continue to do their work effectively.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the United Kingdom will provide over £1 million over the next 12 months in voluntary contributions to OPCW programmes and work streams. This follows our commitment of £1.1 million during the last year which has been used to support Article Ten activity in East and West Africa as part of the Africa Programme; capacity building for laboratories in South America and Africa, support for the IIT and a substantial donation to the ChemTech Centre project. We look forward to working with the Technical Secretariat on programming across regional groups over the coming months.

Thank you Chair.

[Manchester motorway rises up to revitalise 50-year-old bridge](#)

Highways England is repairing the 200-metre-long bridge which carries the M60 over the River Mersey and Palatine Road near Didsbury, and is lifting the motorway by five millimetres – about the thickness of an iPhone – so the work can take place.

Bridge specialist Mabey Hire has been brought in to create temporary structures to support the motorway while workers carry out repairs to the 15 concrete columns that the M60 bridge currently rests on.

Two of the columns were repaired last year and work has now started on the next phase of the project involving two columns at the east end of the bridge.

Around 800 tonnes of motorway – equivalent to the weight of five blue whales – will be lifted above each column using 44 remotely-operated hydraulic jacks, which can be controlled with a tenth of a millimetre precision.

Around 80,000 drivers will be able to continue to use the stretch of motorway over the River Mersey every day with no visible sign of the major engineering work taking place beneath them.

Mark Mosley, project manager at Highways England, said:

The bridge over the Mersey has been there since the motorway first opened in 1974 as part of what was then the M63, and it's beginning

to show its age.

We'll be using teams of specialists to lift up the motorway by a few millimetres and then carry out concrete repairs to the bridge columns, and will be able to keep the road open to drivers throughout the project.

The repairs will help keep the bridge safe for decades to come, so tens of thousands of drivers can continue to use it every day on a key route across the Mersey.

The bridge was originally constructed using reinforced concrete in the early part of the 1970s and some of the steel inside the concrete has now begun to rust. Once the hydraulic jacks are in place, contractors will begin work on repairing the bridge columns.

The motorway was lifted away from a column under the anticlockwise carriageway last week and will be raised above another column overnight on Thursday 12 March.

The anticlockwise carriageway will be closed from 10pm until 6am between junction 5 (Didsbury) and junction 3 (Cheadle) with a diversion taking drivers along the A5103 Princess Parkway, A560 and M56.

Mabey Hire has been awarded a contract to design and install the temporary structure for the bridge repairs. The company's chief executive, Gordon MacDonald, said:

Following the success of our previous involvement on the Palatine Road Viaduct project, we are delighted to have been chosen to supply the temporary propping and monitoring works for the next phase.

It's really great to be working once again on a piece of vital infrastructure in this booming city.

Richard Bailey, director of the scheme's principal contractor, Balvac (Balfour Beatty), added:

We are delighted to be able to provide Highways England with our extensive expertise and specialist team of engineers to carry out this critical project. Our innovative approach to repair works will help deliver this project with minimal delay and disruption to the travelling public.

Work on the Palatine Road bridge will be carried out in phases and all the repairs are due to be completed by 2023.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Innovate UK launches new 3-year programme for Young Innovators

New findings from Innovate UK show that a half of young people in the UK think their age is a barrier to business success with nearly a third lacking the confidence they need to turn their idea into a reality.

The findings are released as Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) announces a £2.2m Young Innovators Programme in partnership with The Prince's Trust.

The national Young Innovators Awards will go to 18–30 year olds with a creative and ground-breaking business idea to support them in turning it into reality.

The programme will support up to 100 young people over 3 years with individuals benefitting from a £5,000 grant, one-on-one coaching and an allowance to cover living costs.

Ben Marson, Director of Partnerships at The Prince's Trust, said:

At The Prince's Trust we believe that every young person, no matter their background, should have the chance to thrive in work. We know the immense potential and entrepreneurial spirit of UK young people but not everyone has the opportunity to turn their ideas into reality.

Working with partners like Innovate UK on the Young Innovators programme allows us to encourage and enable entrepreneurship and innovation among more young people and bring diverse ideas and businesses into the economy.

The Young Innovators Awards programme was launched in 2017 and has already engaged 12,000 young people through a high-profile communications campaign,

Ideas Mean Business.

The new Awards were announced by [Science Minister Amanda Solloway on 8 March 2020.](#)

Ian Campbell, Executive Chair, Innovate UK, said:

“Just having a great idea doesn’t necessarily guarantee success. We know that there are many challenges that can get in the way of new business ideas – especially when it comes to young innovators who, of all the ages groups polled, had the strongest belief they could make their innovative business into a reality.

“Our study shows there are plenty of creative people out there with potentially game-changing ideas, but to launch it in the first place is the main challenge.

“As part of UK Research and Innovation, Innovate UK along with our partners The Prince’s Trust, want to give inspiring young entrepreneurs the opportunity to take their business idea to the next level through our young innovators programme and #IdeasMeanBusiness campaign.”

Innovate UK spoke to 2,000 adults across the UK in a survey that explored the nation’s opinions and experiences with entrepreneurialism and innovation.

Other key findings include:

- in the South West, nearly 50% would like their business/product idea to have a positive impact on healthcare
- in Wales, 68% realise that a university degree is not essential to become a credible entrepreneur
- in Yorkshire and the Humber, 70% think money is the main barrier to launching their own innovative business, whilst 1 in 3 think education and confidence hold them back
- in the North East, 50% see that local innovative businesses are important to the community
- in the North West, nearly 40% would like their business/product idea to have a positive impact on the environment

Previous recipients of the Young Innovators Awards include Adam Root, founder of Inheriting Earth, who has developed a device that helps to accelerate the adoption of a circular economy and save over 100,000 lives per year in the UK and globally by capturing plastic heading towards the ocean and jeweller Claire Skelton who uses traditional skills to produce hand-made contemporary jewellery from reclaimed metal.

Adam Root said:

“Innovate UK has been a true foundation partner for Inheriting Earth and the development of our products. Whilst the financial support of the grant was, of course, essential, we would not be where we are now without their team’s help, support and expertise.”

The funding commitment comes ahead of UKRI releasing its 5-year vision for its work across equality, diversity and inclusion.

If you are between 18 and 30 and are interested in engaging in the programme, please join us at one of our upcoming Ideas Mean Business roadshow events across the UK to get expert advice and find out what support is available to you.

To find out more go to:

Further Ideas Mean Business roadshow events will be held across all regions and parts of the UK over the next three years.

See our regional insight factsheets detailing how UK adults across the country view innovation and entrepreneurship:

[Young Innovators 2020 National fact sheet](#) (PDF, 173KB, 1 page)

[Young Innovators 2020 North West – Regional fact sheet](#) (PDF, 153KB, 1 page)

[Young Innovators 2020 North East – Regional fact sheet](#) (PDF, 153KB, 1 page)

[Young Innovators 2020 Yorkshire & Humber – Regional fact sheet](#) (PDF, 158KB, 1 page)

[Young Innovators 2020 Wales – Regional fact sheet](#) (PDF, 154KB, 1 page)

[Young Innovators 2020 South West – Regional fact sheet](#) (PDF, 160KB, 1 page)

Find out more about the young innovators we have already supported.

[Young Innovator case studies](#) (PDF, 1.74MB, 7 pages)

About Innovate UK

Innovate UK is part of UK Research and Innovation, a non-departmental public body funded by a grant-in-aid from the UK government.

Innovate UK drives productivity and economic growth by supporting businesses to develop and realise the potential of new ideas, including those from the UK's world-class research base.

About the insight:

Innovate UK spoke to 2,000 adults (18+) between 20–24 February 2020 across the UK in a survey that explored the nation's opinions and experiences with entrepreneurialism and innovation. We use the term young people for those who are pooled in the group aged 18–34. Where specified, we have analysed simply the 18–24 category.