

# Consensus reached on protection of women, adolescents, girls, and marginalised communities

Thank you Chair, Excellencies,

The United Kingdom is immensely grateful to you, Mr Chair, to our co-facilitators, El Salvador and the Netherlands, to UNFPA and DESA for their technical expertise, and to our fellow Member States for helping us reach this point. The adoption of this resolution by consensus, for the second year in a row, demonstrates our collective will to take action to protect women, adolescents, girls, and marginalised communities, and signifies the continued importance of this Commission.

We know that sustained and inclusive economic growth can only be realised when all women, adolescents and girls have their full human rights respected, protected and fulfilled, including comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights. The human rights of women, adolescents and girls in all their diversity include the right to have control over, and to decide freely on all matters related to their sexuality.

We welcome the commitments in the resolution to:

- Inclusive and equitable quality education for girls;
- To ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights;
- To increased and sustained investment in measures to empower women, girls, and youth and to provide an enabling environment for the full realisation of their human rights;
- To ensure gender-responsive implementation of climate action;
- To prevent and eliminate sexual and gender based violence;
- And to scale up efforts to accelerate the transition of women from informal to formal employment, including access to decent work, equal pay for equal work and social protection policies.

Importantly, the resolution reaffirms the critical role that UNFPA has in supporting member states to deliver upon the commitments made in this resolution and to ensure the full and effective implementation of the ICPD

and the outcomes of its reviews.

We are, however, disappointed that a more ambitious outcome couldn't be reached. We regret that the text does not contain a stronger focus on the impact of economic exclusion on those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. We also sincerely regret that vital references to sexual rights and essential components such as comprehensive sexuality education are missing from the text.

It is, as we know, vitally important that we are able to achieve a consensus outcome. But we also need to be able to progress and ensure the commitments made in this resolution are reflective of the realities on the ground. The UK looks forward to reconvening next year as we discuss 'Population, education and sustainable development'.

Thank you again Mr, Chair.

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## [Peacebuilding financing remains a critical challenge](#)

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

It is my honour to address you today on the behalf of the Security Council.

As set out in the UN Charter, over 75 years ago, the United Nations was established 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war'. Our purpose is to 'take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace.'

The prevention of violent conflict, peacebuilding and sustaining peace are central to these objectives and our work. But, as the Security Council and the General Assembly both recognised in 2016, effective peacebuilding must involve the entire UN system.

In his January 2022 report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, the Secretary-General highlighted that 'the falling trend of fatalities from armed conflict since the 2014 peak, was reversed in 2020.'

Last year, UN humanitarian appeals reached a record \$39 billion. Peacekeeping cost \$6 billion. The World Bank estimates that the economic impact of violent conflict is \$13.6 trillion a year and that conflict drives 80% of humanitarian needs.

Peacebuilding is the most cost-effective approach to protecting development gains to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Yet, peacebuilding remains under-financed.

The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund is uniquely positioned to support the achievement of the founding principles of the UN. It can act as a catalyst, along with ongoing bilateral efforts, for comprehensive peacebuilding programming in specific contexts that are not adequately served by other funding sources, including in transition settings.

In the twin resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council concluding the 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, Member States noted that peacebuilding financing remains a critical challenge, and decided to convene this High-Level Meeting.

Some progress has been made to resource peacebuilding more effectively, but more is needed to strengthen concerted UN peacebuilding assistance. Here, support to nationally-owned approaches to conflict prevention remains vital.

Peacebuilding requires a broad set of financing instruments and a variety of channels and sources, while adhering to appropriate norms of accountability and transparency.

The Secretary-General has encouraged Member States to explore several means of financing peacebuilding activities, including through public-private partnerships. He has also encouraged strengthened partnerships, including with regional and sub-regional organisations, International Financial Institutions, and civil society.

I recognise the essential role of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office, as critical parts of how the UN can more effectively support peacebuilding. I welcome the most recent letter of the PBC encouraging us to ensure adequate, predictable and sustained financing for comprehensive and inclusive approaches to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The General Assembly may consider a range of options in this High-Level Meeting to address the resource challenges in peacebuilding, and I encourage an action-oriented outcome in this regard.

Thank you.

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## **[Holding the Assad regime accountable for its repeated use of chemical weapons in Syria – UK Statement at the UN Security Council](#)**

I'd like to start by thanking the High Representative for Disarmament

Affairs, Ms Nakamitsu, for her briefing.

The entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention was an important milestone in international security, and we commend the OPCW's success in overseeing the Convention and verifying the destruction of 99% of declared stockpiles.

While almost all States Parties have met their obligations under the Convention, a few continue to develop, acquire, and deploy chemical weapons.

The Syrian regime continues to flout the terms of UNSCR 2118. It has ignored its obligations to cooperate fully with the OPCW to make progress on the outstanding issues on its chemical weapons declaration.

This month marks the anniversaries of chemical weapons attacks at Khan Shaykhun in 2017 and Douma in 2018. We are unwavering in our commitment to hold the Assad regime to account for its repeated uses of chemical weapons against its own people.

In Syria, the use of chemical weapons was both preceded and followed by disinformation. We are therefore concerned to see a similar pattern in Russian disinformation about chemical weapons in Ukraine. The use of chemical weapons in Ukraine would be a callous escalation, and we will hold any state which uses WMD to account.

There must be no impunity for any state that develops, acquires, or deploys chemical weapons anywhere under any circumstances.

With the entry into force of the Convention, the international community pledged to eliminate a class of weapons that inflicted appalling suffering in the last century. With this in mind, I welcome the Council's agreement on a press statement that reaffirms the objectives of the CWC. On its 25th Anniversary, we must collectively recommit to the Convention – it has saved countless lives.

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## **Three month limit for three HRT products to ensure continued access**

- Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) issued to limit dispensing to 3 months' supply of Oestrogel®, Ovestin® cream and Premique Low Dose® to ensure women across the UK will be able to more reliably access Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) products
- Women will only pay for prescriptions if they are dispensed in full meaning they will not face additional costs
- Move follows appointment of Madelaine McTernan as Head of the HRT Supply Taskforce and will enable more women to access the HRT they need

Urgent action is being taken to ensure women across the UK will be able to more reliably access HRT products, as the Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid issues Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) to limit the dispensing of 3 HRT products to 3 months' supply.

In response to concerns regarding longer prescribing cycles putting pressure on availability of some HRT products, the government has made the decision to issue SSPs to three products in high demand to ensure women are able to access the HRT they need.

Women who have a prescription for more than three months but are only able to access three months' supply will not have to pay an additional prescription charge. This means women will not incur any additional costs. Imposing a three month limit will mean more women are able to access the medication they want. Any woman who is worried about access to HRT or is unable to access HRT should speak to her GP.

This follows the recent appointment of Vaccine Taskforce Director General Madelaine McTernan to spearhead a new HRT Supply Taskforce, applying lessons learned from the successful procurement seen during the Covid vaccination programme to identify ways to support the HRT supply chain ensuring it can meet both short and long term demand. The move will save time for patients as well as pharmacists and prescribers who are working tirelessly to tackle the covid backlog.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

I want to reassure women I have listened to their concerns and will not hesitate to take decisive action to ensure they can access the HRT they need.

We will leave no stone unturned in our national mission to boost supply of HRT – and this next step will ensure women across the UK will be able to reliably access this vital medication and maintain this lifeline for millions who need it.

Demand for HRT has dramatically risen with a 38% increase in the number of prescription items over the last seven years as there is greater awareness around the menopause and GPs are more confident in prescribing. Supplies of the vast majority of HRT products, including alternatives to those affected, currently remain available

The SSPs, which are set to expire on Friday 29 July 2022, allow community pharmacists to supply the three specified HRT products according to the protocol rather than the written prescription, without needing to seek authorisation from the prescriber. This will even out distribution of in demand for products such as Oestrogels which have recently experienced issues due to rising demand. Pharmacists are expected to use their professional judgement when deciding to apply the SSP and patients must be consulted.

Head of the HRT Supply Taskforce Madeline McTernan said:

This is a step in the right direction of tackling the supply issues women are facing when it comes to accessing HRT and ensuring ongoing, reliable supply.

Minister for Women's Health Maria Caulfield said:

HRT can be a lifeline for women suffering from severe menopause symptoms including anxiety, difficulty sleeping, night sweats and hot flushes.

We will do everything in our power to make sure women can access the HRT they need both in the short and long term as part of our drive to improve the quality of life for menopausal women.

We are taking action to increase access and reduce the cost of HRT meaning women can pay a one-off charge equivalent to two single prescription charges, currently £18.70, for all their HRT prescriptions for a year.

This prepayment certificate will mean women can access HRT on a month by month basis if need be, easing pressure on supply, while keeping the cost of HRT low. This system will be implemented from April 2023.

This forms part of the wider government agenda to reduce the gender health gap and increase support for menopausal and peri-menopausal women. In the recent call for evidence to inform the upcoming Women's Health Strategy, menopause was the third most selected topic that respondents picked for inclusion in the plan, with 48% of respondents selecting this as a priority. This is in line with the government's commitment to tackle health disparities and support everyone to live healthier, happier lives.

As set out in our women's health vision document, the menopause will be a key priority in the first government-led Women's Health Strategy for England. The UK wide Menopause Taskforce will also consider the role of education and training, workplace policies and peer groups for menopausal women can play in supporting women through what can be a mentally and physically challenging time.

## **Background**

- The SSPs applies across the whole of the UK.
  - The SSPs applies to the following products:
    - Oestrogel pump-pack 750mcg/actuation gel
    - Ovestin 1mg cream
    - Premique low dose 0.3mg/1.5mg modified release tablets
  - The SSPs do not authorise pharmacists to dispense alternative products.
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# COP President Alok Sharma visits Mexico to promote global climate action and implementation of the Glasgow Climate Pact

- COP President Alok Sharma met representatives from the federal and state Mexican government, as well as representatives of civil society, indigenous peoples and youth
- He visited the state of Quintana Roo to hear about sustainable forestry management from communities and see coastal areas blighted by the brown algae sargassum
- The visit was made to follow up on the agreements made during COP26, held in Glasgow in November 2021

COP President Alok Sharma visited Mexico from April 24-27 to drive momentum on delivering commitments made in the Glasgow Climate Pact signed last November by 196 countries.

On his first visit to the country, the COP26 President participated in several bilateral meetings in Mexico City focused on climate action issues, including a push for greater ambition and a net zero commitment.

At the start of the visit, the COP President met representatives of civil society organisations, youth groups and indigenous peoples who highlighted their climate change concerns across sectors including forests, energy, and agriculture.

The COP President also held bilateral Government meetings with Rocío Nahle, Minister of Energy and Martha Delgado, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs. He also met the Mexico City Mobility Secretary, Andres Lajous, during a visit to the Cablebus, the city's new low carbon transport system and the Quintana Roo Secretary of Ecology and Environment, Efrain Villanueva.

Throughout these meetings, Alok Sharma underlined the importance of greater ambition in Mexico's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the potential to achieve a net zero goal as well as the importance of decarbonising Mexico's energy mix. Mexico's perspectives post COP26 and in preparation for COP27 were also heard.

Mr Sharma participated in a business round table with members of the private sector in Mexico to discuss the important role business has to play in delivering the Glasgow Climate Pact and driving ambitious climate action in

the country.

While in Mexico, Mr Sharma also visited Muyil in the Yucatan peninsula to meet with indigenous representatives and hear views on nature-based solutions and community integration in projects in the region.

On his final day he witnessed coastal areas affected by the brown algae sargassum, considered by experts to be a consequence of rising ocean temperatures, fertiliser use and deforestation.

During this visit, the COP President took part in a dialogue with the leading local and federal authorities, including the Mexican Navy tasked with managing the sargassum crisis in the state.

COP26 President, Alok Sharma, said:

I came to Mexico to speak with my government counterparts, civil society groups and business who are all so important in turning climate change commitments into action.

State ministers, parliamentarians and business leaders all demonstrated their commitment to action in undertaking work to tackle climate change.

Many countries are already seeing the impact of climate change, including Mexico.

During my visit to Quintana Roo it was great to see how sustainable forest management and land restoration are being used to protect those most vulnerable to climate change.

Pledges made at COP26 in Glasgow must come to life this year. Mexico has a crucial role in helping to deliver this, both through net zero commitments and shorter-term emission reduction targets. I look forward to the UK and Mexico working closely together on this.

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