**United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland**

**National Statement**

**Universal Periodic Review April 2013 – Turkmenistan**

Thank you, Mr President,

The UK welcomes Turkmenistan, and notes recent positive, though modest, developments including: access to detention facilities by an independent international organisation; the hosting of an international media conference; the release of a small number of individuals named in previous UPR recommendations; and the introduction of a new law on political parties.

However, the UK shares concerns expressed by the UN Human Rights Committee in 2012 about the broad gap between Turkmenistan’s legislation and its implementation. The UK urges Turkmenistan to continue to close this gap including in relation to the prohibition of torture, and ill treatment, and the freedoms of assembly and association. We are concerned in particular by ongoing imprisonments on politically motivated charges and restrictions on freedom of expression and on the use of the Internet.

We recommend:

1. That Turkmenistan creates real space for a multi-party parliamentary election later this year in line with international standards and judged by independent observers to be fully free and fair.

2. That Turkmenistan upholds full freedom of expression, via the internet and other forms of media, including by allowing access to social networking and other blocked sites and by ensuring that national and foreign journalists can operate without fear of harassment.

We further note that Turkmenistan has ten outstanding requests for visits by UN Special Procedures, and call for an improved engagement with UN mechanisms.

Thank you, Mr President.