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N. 4

STATEMENT BY UK MISSION GENEVA ON SAUDI ARABIA'S UPR

21 OCTOBER 2013

Mr President,

The UK supports efforts made by the Saudi government to improve its human rights record.

However, the UK is disappointed that Saudi Arabia has not fulfilled all of the recommendations accepted under the last Universal Periodic Review and hopes these will be given priority. The UK notes Saudi Arabia's continued failure to meet the reporting deadlines for its UN Treaty Body commitments and regrets that access for several UN Special Rapporteurs has not been permitted.

The UK makes the following recommendations:

- 1) First, that the Saudi government allows women to participate fully and equally in society by abolishing the guardianship system, placing more women in positions of authority, and increasing freedom of movement;
- 2) Second, that the Saudi government codifies its criminal law to bring it into line with international law and standards, and ensures it is applied effectively by an independent and impartial judiciary.

Saudi Arabia's justice system remains a concern. For example, prolonged pre-trial detention periods and the improper treatment of detainees. On women's rights, the UK remains concerned at the severe and disproportionate restrictions.

Thank you.