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

**Statement**

**44th Universal Periodic Review – Turkmenistan**

**6 November 2023**

Thank you, Madam Vice-President,

The United Kingdom welcomes steps taken by Turkmenistan in recent months to allow entry to an International Labour Organisation (ILO) mission to examine forced labour in the cotton harvest, though we note the allegations of continued use of state-sponsored forced labour in the annual cotton harvest. We strongly urge the Government to take action on allegations of torture, and restrictions on freedom of religion, or belief, assembly and expression.

The UK remains concerned over enforced disappearances, access to information for citizens, and gender-based violence**.** many of the recommendations which Turkmenistan supported during its last UPR cycle, including those concerning the signature of the Rome Statute and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torturehave not been carried out.

We recommend:

1. Sign and ratify the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.

1. Introduce legislation which prohibits the use of forced labour and establishes preventative mechanisms and appropriate oversight structures, working closely with the ILO.
2. Remove restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly, and on access to information.

Thank you.