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

**Statement**

**45th Universal Periodic Review – Afghanistan**

**Monday 29 April 2024**

Thank you, Mr President.

The UK thanks the PR for his presence and his engagement.

It is shocking to see how rapidly the human rights situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated since Afghanistan’s 2019 UPR, when the then-Afghan government accepted hundreds of recommendations, including on the rights of women and girls.

The situation for women and girls in Afghanistan is dire. Access to secondary education, to higher education, to public and political spaces, and to many employment opportunities are all denied by the Taliban. UNAMA has recently reported that these restrictions are increasing. The Taliban are targeting former government officials despite their announcement of a general amnesty. And they continue to target journalists – replacing an independent media with extensive censorship. Human Rights Council mechanisms have drawn our attention to the brutal use of public floggings and executions and ongoing discrimination against minority communities.

We recommend that Afghanistan:

1. Lift draconian restrictions on education and employment for women and girls.
2. Cease the arbitrary arrest and detention of journalists and release those detained.
3. End the use of the floggings and other state-sanctioned cruel punishment and abolish the death penalty.

Thank you.