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

**Statement**

**Universal Periodic Review – Guatemala**

**November 2017**

Thank you Mr President.

We welcome the advances made by the government of Guatemala since its last UPR, in particular increased efforts and resources to protect women against violence; and the increase in the marriage age to 18 years, agreed by Congress in 2015.

We recognise the positive steps the government has taken on justice reform, aimed at improving and strengthening the justice system and increasing the inclusion of marginalised groups. However, we note with concern that progress has stalled.

The criminalisation of human rights defenders also remains a concern, as does the lack of a fully independent press. We urge the government to ensure the protection of human rights defenders, and to protect freedom of the press.

The UK notes Guatemala’s efforts on tackling impunity and corruption. However, the latest political crisis and the actions taken by the government against the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala are of great concern.

**We have the following recommendations:**

1. Take all necessary steps to ensure that key government institutions responsible for tackling human trafficking – especially of women and children - are properly funded.
2. Adopt an open, merit-based selection process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections.
3. Ensure that the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala is able to perform its work effectively.

Thank you.