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

**Statement**

**Universal Periodic Review – Guatemala**

**Wednesday 25th January 2023**

Thank you, Mr Vice-President.

Last November, I travelled to Guatemala and had the privilege of meeting civil society representatives and judges, who highlighted the challenging context they operate in.

We are concerned by threats to the rule of law in Guatemala. The continued criminalisation of human rights defenders and members of the judiciary is particularly worrying. We urge the government to guarantee due process.

We note the increasingly challenging environment for journalists and media organisations. We urge the government to protect media freedom, ensure free access to information, and tackle disinformation.

While we recognise the positive steps that the Guatemalan government has taken on access to justice, we remain concerned by the lack of new legislation to protect women and vulnerable groups.

We recommend that Guatemala:

1. Repeal and withdraw legislation weakening the rule of law and endangering the fight against corruption;
2. Protect and strengthen civic space by adopting a public policy for the protection of human rights defenders as well as a mechanism for the protection of journalists, guaranteeing that they will receive both political support and sufficient resources;
3. Enhance the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls, including strengthening those institutions, such as the Presidential Secretariat for Women, dedicated to eliminating violence against women and girls.

Thank you.