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

**Statement**

**Universal Periodic Review – Congo**

**November 2018**

Thank you Mr President,

 The UK welcomes efforts by the Government of Congo to reduce high maternal and child mortality rates; to improve the treatment of malnutrition; and to reduce malaria.

The UK remains deeply concerned that, since 2015, the human rights situation in Congo has deteriorated. Very complex challenges remain, including addressing ongoing reports of torture in places of detention and sexual violence against women and children.

With regret, we note that commitments to abolish the death penalty have not yet been fulfilled and encourage ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

We recommend:

1. Include a definition of torture in the Criminal Code, which fully incorporates Article 1 of the Convention against Torture within this UPR cycle;
2. Accede to the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the 2000 UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol.
3. Ensure that national candidates to UN human rights treaty body elections are selected through an open and merit-based process.