

Ensuring the UN is fit for purpose in 2021 and beyond

Mr President, Secretary General, thank you for joining us today and for outlining your priorities for the year ahead. The UK was honoured to host your first virtual visit of 2021. The visit marked how far the UN has come since those first meetings in London 75 years ago. We hope to welcome you in person soon.

Secretary General, in its 75th anniversary year, the UN faces a pivotal moment. As you said, a transition from annus horribilis to a year of hope and opportunity. Your ten challenges are clear. I will comment on three.

On COVID-19, we need to agree a pathway out of this crisis and build a more resilient and responsive pandemic preparedness system for the future. The UK is committed to working with you in your call for the urgent funding needed to ensure COVAX reaches its targets for 2021, and vaccines reach all who need them.

Second, on climate, we have, as you say, to drive up ambition across all climate and environmental issues. As incoming COP26 President, we are committed to working with all partners to secure a balanced, negotiated package that keeps the goals of the Paris Agreement within reach and delivers for the most vulnerable.

Third, both COVID and climate increase the risk of conflict and its humanitarian impacts, which you set out: famine, migration, sexual violence and many more. The UK will use our Security Council Presidency next month to focus on conflict and hunger. We need to be better, as you said, at anticipating crises, and we must acknowledge that humanitarian crises require political solutions. The UK will continue to be a committed humanitarian donor and calls on others to step up at this time of great need.

In order to achieve our objectives we need to continue your ambitious reform agenda. We need a UN that is inclusive and fit for purpose. The UK is committed to working closely with you and the membership to get us there. Finally, Secretary General, may I thank you for the leadership you have shown during your tenure, particularly this past year. As my Prime Minister has already said, the UK fully supports your decision to run for a second term.

Secretary General, my question is on climate finance. Increasing the quantity and predictability of climate finance is a priority for the UK's COP26 Presidency. We are calling on all donor countries to commit to increased post-2020 finance commitments to achieve and surpass the \$100 billion goal, which is critical for developing countries. But as your recent report made clear, we are some way off meeting the \$100 billion commitment. What steps must the international community take now to ensure we meet this commitment in 2021?

Thank you.