

Looking towards the mandate renewal of the UN Support Mission In Libya

Thank you President, and let me thank SRSG Bathily for his inaugural briefing to the Council, and congratulate him on taking up his appointment. SRSG Bathily – you have the full support of the United Kingdom in the implementation of your mandate. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Libya in our meeting today.

President, it is regrettable that Libya's political elite have made no further progress to agree a basis on which to hold free, fair and inclusive parliamentary and presidential elections. I therefore welcome SRSG Bathily's efforts to engage with all Libyan parties across the country, including civil society, women, and youth groups.

As a Council we should now urge all Libyan parties, in particular Libya's political leaders, to work constructively with SRSG Bathily, and agree a roadmap to elections as soon as possible. This is in the interest of all the Libyan people.

President, I would also like to highlight two areas that are undermining prospects for free, fair and inclusive elections. First, the UK is deeply concerned by reports of increased restrictions on, and a deteriorating operating space for, civil society in Libya. As well as administrative impediments, civil society organisations reportedly face an escalation in the level and frequency of scrutiny of their operations.

A vibrant civil society is critical for the holding of free, fair, and inclusive elections. It is an essential component of a functioning democracy, leading to greater stability and prosperity. So we urge all Libyan authorities to ensure a safe, secure and unhindered operating environment for civil society.

Second, President, we call on all Libyan parties to protect the neutrality, integrity and reunification of public institutions so as to ensure that Libya's wealth is used for the good of all citizens. Reports of the misuse of public funds, set out in the recent Audit Bureau's report, damage the credibility of Libya's institutions. These institutions must be supported to serve the whole of Libya and all Libyan people.

Finally, President, I would like to thank Council members for their constructive engagement in negotiations to renew UNSMIL's mandate for a year. We look forward to the resolution's adoption later this week. Thank you.