

Speech: “There’s an unprecedented demand for multilateral responses to global challenges – and the international system must evolve to keep up.”

Well thank you very much Mr. President, thank you Secretary-General, thank you Deputy Secretary-General for your initiative, for your report, and for your presentation this morning.

Look, we’re here for a simple reason. Extreme poverty, and conflict, and humanitarian crises are completely interlinked. More so than ever before. And in combination, this means that more people than at any point in human history need the UN development system. We’re failing too many of them. We need to do better. The good news is that we can do better. And we need to reform the UN and we need to do it now.

I think we all want an effective, rules-based international system. In the UK view, a reformed United Nations must be at the heart of that international system to prevent and resolve conflict, to help countries develop sustainably, to respond to humanitarian crises, and to build and sustain peace. In short, we want the UN to live up to its full potential.

There’s an unprecedented demand for multilateral responses to global challenges – and the international system must evolve to keep up. And that is why your strong vision, Secretary-General, for reform is so welcome. And it’s why this report is such a welcome step in the right direction.

Millions of people are currently relying on a development system whose processes and whose institutions were set up over half a century ago. Since then, more and more structures have been added, and a fair bit of red tape with them.

It is our duty now to refocus, reorganise, and renew.

And like other speakers, I want to thank you personally Secretary-General and you Deputy Secretary-General for driving forward this agenda personally. You have our appreciation. You have our full support and I hope that together we can move forward with the reform that the UN development system so much needs.

And I’m sure I speak for almost everyone in the room in saying that we want to be part of creating that future for this great organisation. That’s why we are so pleased that there has been so much consultation with Member States so far and we look forward to further consultation between now and December. But we have entrusted the leadership of this great organisation to you, and it is

right that you use your authority to steer the reform that you judge the organisation needs.

I won't respond right now to the specifics in the report. Let me simply say that first of all I'm very glad that there are so many concrete proposals in there. I welcome all of your eight guiding ideas. And I particularly like this repeated emphasis on leadership, effectiveness, accountability, and performance.

The UK strongly supports your efforts to bring about meaningful change and we will carry on putting our money where our mouth is. We're the second largest donor to the UN development system. We're very proud of that, and we want to make our funding support your reform agenda. And I know that my International Development Secretary, Priti Patel, is keen to discuss that with you as soon as possible.

So we will keep calling for ambition, we will keep calling for a bold approach to UN reform. And we will do so with the millions who need the UN development system in mind. They deserve more than we are currently offering them. They deserve an improvement on the status quo. This report is a very good start, but it is just the first step. We now need all of us to come together to help the UN to deliver it, and build on it, to keep the UN relevant and central to the multilateral needs of today.

Thank you.