

# Welcoming cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional bodies (EU)

Thank you very much, Mr President. And let me also welcome High Representative Borrell today and thank him for what was a wide-ranging intervention. And I will try to respond to some, if not all, of the issues he raised.

Mr President, the United Kingdom left the European Union on 31 January. We continue to work closely with our European partners, and our outlook will always be global. We recognise the mutual benefits of international cooperation across all areas of the United Nations cross-cutting work to promote international peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

Mr President, as the world grapples with COVID-19, it is clear that pandemics do not respect borders. Saving lives around the world requires a coordinated international response. To deliver a robust global response we must all continue to support the international system and the values and rules which underpin it. Tackling this pandemic and its grave effects on our shared parity and stability requires enhanced trust in national governments, in international cooperation, and international agreements.

High Representative Burrell and other speakers have raised the situation in Hong Kong. The United Kingdom is deeply troubled by the decision of the National People's Congress of China to impose national security legislation on the people of Hong Kong. If China follows through on this decision, it would clearly violate Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and freedoms as enshrined in the United Kingdom-China Joint Declaration. I would like to draw the attention of all Council members to the joint statement that Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab issued earlier today with his US, Canadian and Australian counterparts, which sets out our concerns in more detail. We hope that China will now pause to reconsider, take steps to rebuild trust and heal divisions across Hong Kong society and live up to its responsibilities and obligations as a leading member of the international community. In the meantime, the United Kingdom will remain in close contact with all our international partners about next steps.

Mr President, to end the COVID-19 pandemic we need to work with all our international partners, including the EU and the UN. International collaboration keeps supply chains functioning, supports finding and distributing a vaccine, and guides the vital health, humanitarian and development operations of United Nations funds, programmes and agencies in the field. Demands on them will only grow as the crisis deepens. Our response must include supporting the most vulnerable countries, and particularly those directly affected by ongoing conflict. In this regard we welcome the African Union's role in the co-operative relationship between the EU, UN and AU in

supporting African leadership in states and regions affected by conflict. As part of our global efforts to tackle the virus, the United Kingdom will make a direct contribution of almost \$25 million to the AU's Africa Anti-COVID-19 Fund to help efforts to slow the spread of the virus on the continent and to save lives.

We must ensure we make a green, clean recovery from COVID-19 in order to meet the challenge of Climate Change and ensure an ambitious, successful and inclusive COP26. As COP President, the United Kingdom looks forward working with the UN and the EU to deliver the ambitious outcome the world so urgently needs. We consider our European partners as close allies in combating climate change and in leading the world in low carbon transition.

Mr President, some colleagues have mentioned sanctions. Let me simply say that sanctions are a targeted foreign policy tool used as part of a comprehensive and proportionate strategy with careful exemptions for humanitarian activity. The United Kingdom strongly supported EU sanctions while a member of the European Union and continues now to implement them nationally for the duration of the transition period.

Turning to some of the other points raised by the High Representative, on the Western Balkans, we join international partners supporting the goal of a stable region, continuing its progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration. We welcome the decision to open EU accession negotiations with Albania in North Macedonia. The political agreements in Bosnia and Herzegovina to work on the EU opinion and efforts to normalise the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo through the EU-facilitated dialogue. NATO remains the cornerstone of Europe's collective defense, and we were pleased to welcome North Macedonia to the Alliance earlier this year.

Turning to Ukraine, the United Kingdom will continue to work with the European Union and other partners in support of international law and the wider rules-based international system to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity. Alongside our international partners, we will continue to make clear to Russia that we do not and will not accept its illegal annexation of Crimea and Sebastopol. We also underline our support for efforts through the Normandy Process to facilitate a negotiated end to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and the work of the Trilateral Contact Group.

You mentioned, High Representative the work of the European Union in Libya. The EU and UK have continued to work closely on Libya, including through engagement with the Berlin process. We look forward to further cooperation with our European partners to urge Libyan parties and their backers to de-escalate, commit to a lasting ceasefire, ensure unconditional access for humanitarian aid and return to the UN-led process. We support efforts to enforce the UN arms embargo leading through Operation IRINI and recall of the tragic loss of life in the Mediterranean continues to be a matter of deep regret.

On Iran, we are working urgently with all parties to use the Dispute Resolution Mechanism to find a way forward on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We regard the Agreement, which was the product of many years of

painstaking diplomacy, as a vital instrument in neutralising the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran. We thank the European Union for their ongoing role as coordinator. I want to acknowledge the points made by the High Representative and my E3 colleagues on the US's decision to not reduce nuclear waivers and underline the importance of continued engagement on the way forward. While we recognise the agreement's limitations, we continue to work closely with the remaining parties to the deal to find a diplomatic way forward. We have always been clear over our concerns about Iran's destabilising behaviour, including in Yemen, and our consulting partners, on the broader implications of expiry of the arms embargo in October 2012.

Finally, Mr President, we know the EU/UN cooperation can be particularly effective in the field of peacekeeping. Collaboration through training, partnerships and complementary security initiatives can multiply efforts to further stability, allowing different actors to play distinct but supporting roles. In the Sahel, for example, we value the work of the EU training mission in its efforts to train the Malian armed forces, to which the United Kingdom continues to provide support. We are proud to be partnering with France in Operation Barkhane and also proud to be deploying a 250-strong military contingent to MINUSMA later this year. This will provide situational awareness and information provision for the benefit of all international actors on the ground.

Mr President, an effective United Nations able to tackle so many global challenges is in all of our interests. The United Kingdom will continue to work constructively with the European Union and all other UN members to achieve this.

Thank you, Mr President.

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## **Celebrating 10 years of Green Engineering in Cumbria**

The Environment Agency is celebrating ten years of successful soft engineering along Cumbria rivers that has improved habitats and water quality, protected fish and got more people fishing throughout Cumbria and the Scottish borders.

The programme of work, funded through fishing licence sales, has been led by Environment Agency's Mike Farrell, who is a keen angler himself. The series of work has included many different soft engineering techniques at different locations throughout Cumbria including river restoration, tree planting and habitat creation.

Environment Agencies Mike Farrell said

“This has been a great programme to work on over the last 10 years, it’s good to see that all our hard work has paid off. Having successfully completed 130 projects, working with 219 different partner organisations, the programme has led to significant environmental improvements across Cumbria.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in this project over the years, from our partners to local school children, local angling groups to the passing public and schools further afield. It really is amazing what can be done when we all come together. Looking back and seeing work we implemented 10 years ago thriving and working to its best potential is certainly rewarding and makes all the hard work from everyone involved totally worth it!’’

Over the last ten years, the Environment Agency, as part of the works, have coordinated the planting of 31,995 trees across the county. This provides river bank stabilisation, creates shaded areas to help boost fish populations and slow the flow of the rivers. All completed with the help of hundreds of school pupils, local angling clubs, associations and environmentalists adding up to thousands of volunteer hours.

The programme has introduced of over 2072 meters of willow to protect banks from erosion as well as 44,141 meters of fencing along water courses. This helps to create riparian strips (area where land meets water) and wildlife corridors. It also allows natural rejuvenation of the river banks, contributes to natural flood management due to re-profiling of the river banks and also decreases the amount of sediment that goes into the river. Along with this the introduction of 58 sections of woody material debris and management of gravel beds provide shelter for young fish and creates channel diversity, enhancing fish to naturally breed leading to a higher number of fish in our rivers.

Dale Renac, Chairman of the River Ellen Angling Association (REAA) said

‘We send our thanks from the REAA to the Environment Agency for their funding and help when carrying out projects on the river Ellen. Six years ago the Bullgill project was started and has now created an excellent riparian strip with over 500 trees planted, the biggest part of it being willow which helped reduce erosion of the river banks.

To this present day were seeing a big increase in damsel fly’s and dragon fly in the improved and replaced river banks. Juvenile fish can be seen amongst the new vegetation that has grown near the river banks and otters and kingfisher are regularly sighted in the area. It is so good to see what can be achieved from these projects when we all come together to help the environment’

The Environment Agency has also worked with hundreds of school children from 15 different schools, across Cumbria, Nottingham and Sunderland. Students from Sunderland attend with Derwent Hill outdoor education centre in Cumbria.

Matthew Ellis, director for the centre said:

“The Environment Agency, through our relationship with Mike Farrell, have been instrumental in these courses providing expert guidance, advice on sensitive and vulnerable locations and up to date information about the current ecological challenges.

In the last three years we are very proud to have planted over two thousand trees and engaged in real projects such as shoring up river banks after devastating floods thanks to this ongoing support.”

A spokesperson for the Oak Field Special Needs school said:

“Oak Field School is a school for children with severe learning difficulties aged 3 to 19 years. For over 10 years, sixth form students and old students have had the great opportunity to work with Mike Farrell and the Environment Agency team.

The students have planted trees and cleared Himalayan Balsam, it has been an amazing and successful project to be involved in over the years, giving the young people the confidence and the experience of working together to put something back into the environment.

The students learnt a lot about the need to care for the countryside and the impact that conservation has on the local environment. Many of the students return every year and look forward to meeting Mike and the friendly and helpful Environment Agency team.

The school and students appreciate the fantastic opportunity to partake in conservation of rivers and nature, we hope to return next year to spend some more quality time caring for our environment in the beautiful location of the Lake District.”

The project has been rewarding for all involved and it is clear that by working together great things can be achieved.

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## **Cleve Hill Solar Park Project granted development consent**

Press release

Today, Thursday 28 May 2020, the application for the proposed Cleve Hill Solar Park Project near Faversham in Kent has been granted development consent by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.



Development consent has been given for a solar photovoltaic array, and electrical storage and connection infrastructure, with a generation capacity of greater than 50 MW.

The development is located on land approximately 2 km northeast of Faversham and 5 km west of Whitstable on the North Kent Coast. The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by Cleve Hill Solar Park Limited on the 16 November 2018 and accepted for examination on 14 December 2018. Following an examination during which the Applicant, Statutory Consultees and Interested Parties were given the opportunity to provide evidence to the Examining Authority, a recommendation was made to the Secretary of State on 28 February 2020.

The Planning Inspectorate's Chief Executive, Sarah Richards said:

"The Planning Inspectorate is committed to giving local communities the opportunity of being involved in the examination of projects that may affect them. Local people, the local authority and other interested parties were able to participate in a 6-month long examination. The Examining Authority listened and gave full consideration to local views before making their recommendation."

This is the 87th nationally significant infrastructure project to have been examined and decided within the timescales laid down in the Planning Act 2008. The decision, the recommendation made by the Examining Authority to the Secretary of State and the evidence considered by the Examining Authority in reaching its recommendation is publicly available on the [National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

## **ENDS**

Journalists wanting further information should contact the Planning Inspectorate Press Office, on: 0303 444 5004 or 0303 444 5005 or email: [Press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:Press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

## **Notes to editors:**

The Planning Inspectorate, [National Infrastructure Programme of Projects](#) details the proposals which are anticipated to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as applications in the coming months.

## [PM call with First Ministers: 28 May 2020](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke with the First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as the deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland.



This afternoon the Prime Minister had a call with the First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as the deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland.

The PM made clear that as we begin to move to the next phase of tackling this virus, he remains determined to work closely with the devolved administrations. This continues to be a UK-wide approach, even though we may travel at slightly different speeds based on the scientific evidence.

He also stressed the importance of particularly close engagement on programmes that must be UK-wide to be most effective. This includes contact tracing, where coordinated systems across the UK will be critical to the next phase of our efforts. They also discussed the important work of the UK Joint Biosecurity Centre in making the response across the country increasingly targeted.

They all agreed that continued engagement is vital and that they will remain in close contact in the days and weeks ahead.

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# International supercomputer pact set to fire up UK COVID-19 research

- The UK becomes the first country outside the US to join the COVID-19 High-Performance Computing consortium set up in response to the pandemic
- the consortium will allow UK researchers to bid for access to some of the world's fastest supercomputers
- UK commits to working with G7 nations to tackle coronavirus, including sharing research and identifying novel solutions

The UK will be the first country, outside the US, to join the global [COVID-19 High Performance Computing](#) (HPC) consortium, Science Minister Amanda Solloway announced today (Thursday 28 May).

The consortium, launched by the US in response to the global pandemic, will allow the UK's world-leading researchers and scientists to gain access to the world's largest and fastest supercomputers and perform complex calculations quickly. This will rapidly accelerate UK coronavirus research, helping further treatments, knowledge and understanding of how the disease behaves through advanced modelling.

Bringing together government, industry, and academic leaders, the consortium has 40 members including IBM, US Department of Energy, Google and NASA. It has already supported 59 research projects, all running on high performance computing machines – including London based AI start up, [Kuano](#), which is using the facilities to gain insights from diseases similar to COVID-19, such as SARs, to help design a new drug to defeat the virus.

The announcement was made during the G7 Science and Technology Ministerial held today, with the UK represented by Minister Solloway and John Whittingdale, Minister for Media and Data.

During the virtual meeting of science and technology ministers, the G7 nations set out a shared vision on tackling the pandemic. As a result, the UK committed to enhancing cooperation on shared COVID-19 research priority areas and launching a global partnership on artificial intelligence.

UK Science Minister, Amanda Solloway said:

Tackling coronavirus requires a joint and strong international effort and the very best minds in science and technology sharing their research and knowledge.

By joining this consortium, our leading researchers will be able to access some of the most advanced computers in the world to speed up their research, gain access to new developments, and share the UK's



world-class computing technologies to find a solution to this virus.

UK Data Minister, John Whittingdale said:

The UK has a longstanding reputation for innovation so it is fantastic to see our researchers and scientists working with the world's fastest supercomputers to accelerate the treatment, research and understanding of the coronavirus.

We are determined to use the power of data and emerging technologies to improve people's lives and the UK will make a vital contribution to the consortium.

The UK's access to the High-Performance Computing consortium will be led by [UK Research and Innovation](#) (UKRI). The consortium will also ensure that the UK's other high performing computing facilities are contributing to the global effort against COVID-19, with the Met Office and UK Atomic Energy Authority providing capabilities.

### **Notes to editors**

Visit the High-Performance Computing (HPC) consortium website to see [its full membership](#).