

UK statement in response to OSCE Head of Mission visit to Kosovo

Thank you Mr Chair

The UK welcomes Ambassador Braathu to the Permanent Council. We thank you for the comprehensive Report on the Mission's activities during the reporting period. And we echo the views expressed in the EU statement.

I would first of all like – on a personal level – to thank you and your team for your hospitality during my recent visit to Kosovo. And for the excellent programme you put together. The meetings with your team and your interlocutors was an immensely valuable experience. This included learning about the Mission's role in monitoring developments, its work on the ground with bringing communities and different ethnicities together – often in challenging circumstances – and in supporting interfaith dialogue and support for the Roma community. I visited Mitrovica, Prizren and Pristina. I was struck by the on the ground efforts to foster dialogue, discussion and reconciliation. As well as the high reputation of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. And I applaud you and your team's efforts.

As your Report notes, the key development of the last six months was the extraordinary Assembly of Kosovo elections on 6 October. We echo the comments in your Report, commending Kosovo for conducting elections in a well-administered and transparent manner. The UK is grateful to the Mission for the technical advice and assistance provided in this process in four northern Kosovo municipalities. On 18 October, the Head of Kosovo's Central Electoral Commission also briefed us in Vienna on the electoral process and her work with the Mission. This was an excellent opportunity for delegations to hear first-hand from one of your interlocutors. And we look forward to a further briefing from a Kosovo interlocutor later in the year.

With early warning and prevention being a key part of the OSCE's work, your spot reports are highly valuable. In your report of 14 October you highlighted an issue with certain postal votes and the actions that were being taken. We appreciate such timely information on key developments.

On the range of activities detailed in your report, I would like to highlight your work with local communities. In particular, the engagement of youth can be a force for good in bridging ethnic divides. We appreciate that you worked to bring different ethnic and religious communities together through, for example, youth camps, volunteer work and engaging students in inter-ethnic dialogue to promote mutual understanding. We welcome these positive efforts.

We also welcome the support of the Mission in enhancing the capacities of local law enforcement institutions to identify and tackle hate crimes and bias-motivated incidents.

Your Report details other areas in which you have been active in this

reporting period, including on displaced persons, where you have increased your thematic reporting. And used these documents as an advocacy tool to support change.

On gender, we welcome the initiatives you have taken to raise awareness on mainstreaming and the importance of gender equality, including through the production of eight televised programmes, and your work with journalists. Without gender equality, and the meaningful participation of women in the processes that affect their lives, progress will always be limited.

In addition – during the 16 days of Activism you launched the Report on the ‘OSCE-led Survey on the Well-being and Safety of Women in Kosovo’. This Report highlighted the prevalence of violence against women, and it included 37 recommendations on how to address it. We would be grateful to hear more on the feedback you received from your roundtable meetings.

Your support for democratic institutions and oversight arrangements is critical. The areas of media literacy and safety of journalists have rightly received your attention. However, challenges remain in the justice system. We welcome further engagement of the mission in this important area.

On the current political situation, I refer to previous published statements made by my Government together with other countries. We encourage a return to Dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade as soon as possible with the goal of a comprehensive agreement that has the support of elected representatives in both countries. We hope that a constructive way forward will soon be found.

Thank you.

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UN Human Rights Council 43: UK statement for the discussion on the Secretary General's oral update on the involvement of the UN in the situation of human rights in Myanmar

Thank you, Madame President.

The UK thanks the Secretary General for his commitment to human rights in Myanmar, and his determination to fully implement the recommendations in the Rosenthal report. It is right the UN takes a system-wide and systematic approach to addressing human rights concerns in Myanmar, as it should in all countries in which it operates.

The Rosenthal report, along with reporting from the Special Rapporteur and the Fact Finding Mission, whilst noting the primary responsibility of the government of Myanmar, include lessons for the UN system, and us all, in preventing and mitigating the human rights crises in the future.

We were pleased that the Secretary General's statement at the start of this Human Rights Council made a clear reference to the importance and continued relevance of Human Rights Up Front, and its vital role in placing human rights and early warning at the heart of the UN. We look forward to hearing more about how he intends to secure Human Rights Up Front's place in the system, and how he intends to take forward his call to action.

Finally, we would like to ask what, in the Secretary General's view, states can do to ensure the success of Human Rights Up Front?

Shared Rural Network

- Ministers and bosses from UK mobile phone operators will meet today to

sign agreement

- New network will see greatest improvements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Deal will take 4G coverage to 95 per cent of the UK landmass by end of 2025

Ministers and bosses from mobile network operators will meet this afternoon to sign a £1 billion deal to make poor and patchy rural phone coverage a thing of the past.

The world-first deal will be a huge boost for people across the country in rural areas and will deliver strong 4G coverage irrespective of what network provider people use.

The ambition is to make sure everyone can benefit from fast services on the go – from those running small businesses to people shopping or booking travel online to speaking to friends and family. It will spur economic growth and close the digital divide across the country through better connectivity.

The Shared Rural Network (SRN) is a deal with EE, O2, Three and Vodafone investing in a network of new and existing phone masts, overseen by a jointly owned company called Digital Mobile Spectrum Limited, they would all share.

It will provide guaranteed coverage to 280,000 premises and 16,000km of roads. We can also expect some further indirect improvements over time, including a boost to 'in car' coverage on around 45,000 km of road and better indoor coverage in around 1.2m business premises and homes.

The deal will lead to increases in coverage in some areas by more than a third, with the biggest coverage improvements in rural parts of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

It means all four mobile network operators will deliver 95 per cent combined coverage across the whole of the UK by the end of 2025 and consumers can rely on their own provider's network wherever they are.

It follows moves by the government to improve digital infrastructure by making it easier and cheaper for the private sector to deploy faster broadband to the most commercial areas of the country, new legislation to make it easier for telecoms firms to connect blocks of flats, and plans to mandate gigabit-capable connectivity in new build premises.

The government has also pledged £5 billion to subsidise the roll out of gigabit capable broadband in the harder-to-reach areas of the country.

Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

For too many people in the countryside a bad phone signal is a daily frustration

So today we're delivering on the Prime Minister's 100-day promise to get a £1 billion landmark deal signed with industry to end poor and patchy mobile rural coverage

This is an important milestone to level up the country, improve people's lives and increase prosperity across the length and breadth of our United Kingdom.

Philip Jansen, Chief Executive, BT Group

High-speed mobile connectivity is a central part of modern life whether you live and work in a city centre or in the countryside. Building out fast and reliable access to 4G across the country is a national mission and we're playing a leading role, collaborating with government and the other mobile network operators in the UK, to make this happen. The Shared Rural Network is something we can all be proud of.

Mark Evans, CEO of O2, said:

I'm proud of the work we've done to secure the Shared Rural Network agreement, ensuring customers living in rural areas will be able to get the fast and reliable coverage they need and deserve. The collaboration between the industry, government and Ofcom should be seen as a leading example of how to deliver infrastructure investment and we look forward to now rolling the Shared Rural Network out as quickly as possible.

Dave Dyson, CEO Three, said:

The Shared Rural Network is a game-changer for the country with coverage from each of the four operators expanding to at least 90% of the UK's geography.

Vodafone UK Chief Executive Officer, Nick Jeffery, said:

A rural postcode should not be a barrier to receiving a decent mobile signal. Together, we have created a programme that is unmatched anywhere in the world. It will mean an end to mobile 'not spots' for people in the more remote areas whether they are at home, at work or on the move. We will now get on with the job of delivering it.

Ben Roome, CEO of Digital Mobile Spectrum Limited:

The Shared Rural Network is fantastic news for people who live and work in our beautiful countryside. In making it happen we'll listen to rural communities and strive to maximise the benefits it will bring.

Hamish MacLeod, Director at Mobile UK, said:

The Shared Rural Network partnership between the mobile operators and the government is unprecedented in both its scope and its ambition. Mobile UK looks forward to supporting the delivery of the programme in the coming years.

Strong competition promotes industry investment in mobile coverage in dense urban areas, but rural areas have fewer potential customers and have not seen the level of investment needed to provide good coverage.

The new deal means the four networks have committed to legally binding contracts and investing £532m to close almost all partial not-spots: areas where there is currently only coverage from at least one but not all operators.

This investment will then be backed by more than £500 million of government funding to eliminate total not-spots: hard-to-reach areas where there is currently no coverage from any operator. This will provide new digital infrastructure in total not spot areas not commercially viable for the operators.

The legally binding coverage commitments will be enforced by Ofcom which will have the power to issue fines up to 10 per cent of an operator's gross revenue if they fail to meet their targets.

Notes to Editors:

For 4G networks, Ofcom defines coverage based on the minimum signal strength required to deliver a 95% probability of making a 90-second telephone call successfully completed, and a 95% chance of getting a download speed of at least 2Mbit/s.

Coverage in Scotland, where there are unique geographical and landscape challenges and sparsely populated areas, will rise by more than ten per cent to 91 per cent from at least one operator and 74 per cent from all four operators. This compares to 80 per cent and 42 per cent today.

Coverage in Wales will improve to 95 per cent from at least one operator and 80 per cent from all four operators. This compares to 89 per cent and 58 per cent today.

Coverage in Northern Ireland will reach 98 per cent from at least one operator and 85 per cent from all four operators. This compares to 97 per cent and 75 per cent today.

Coverage in England will improve to 98 per cent coverage from at least one operator and 90 per cent from all four operators. This compares to 97 per cent and 81 per cent today.

The UK has a vibrant telecoms industry and the government is keen the SRN programme reflects that. The programme would be delivered jointly by all four MNOs but it is expected that organisations across the industry would have the opportunity to get involved in the delivery of the programme at various levels of the supply chain, building the required infrastructure in an open, fair and transparent way.

To ensure that these coverage targets are met, Ofcom has developed legally enforceable coverage obligations that are attached to the mobile network operators' radio spectrum licences. These commit the operators to:

- Each reach 88 per cent coverage of the UK by 2024;
- Each reach 90 per cent coverage of the UK by 2026;
- Each reach nation-specific coverage targets in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales by 2026;
- Collectively provide additional coverage to 280,000 premises and 16,000km of roads by 2026.

Together this means all four mobile network operators will deliver 95 per cent combined coverage across the whole of the UK by the end of 2025.

Business Secretary and COP26 President, Alok Sharma's statement at the COP26 Briefing to all Member States at the United Nations, New York

Secretary-General, excellences, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour to be here at the United Nations for my first international engagement as COP26 President.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the great leadership he has shown in tackling climate change.

I look forward to working with him and the wider UN team in the lead up to COP26.

In my first three weeks as COP26 President I have met with the Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa.

Other former COP Presidents, such as Laurent Fabius.

Civil society organisations.

Corporate leaders and finance executives.

Encouragingly, there has been a strong level of agreement that we must act now to tackle climate change.

Whilst in New York this has been further reinforced through my meetings with the permanent representatives of the Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries and others who are on the frontline of climate impacts.

Failure to act, will cause irreversible consequences.

As temperatures continue to rise, droughts and heatwaves will become more common.

The risk of crops failing will increase.

Sea levels will rise by anywhere between 1 to 3 feet by the end of this century.

Hurricanes will become stronger and more intense.

These events will put human life at risk.

Lead to population displacement.

It will devastate nature and biodiversity.

And exact a catastrophic economic cost

I do not need to tell many of you in this room what the impact to human life will be, because many of your countries are already living with the realities of climate change.

Over the past 25 years an estimated 4.5 billion people have been affected by disasters, 90% of which have been caused by weather and climate related events.

The UK first responders to Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas last year described the scenes on the ground as apocalyptic.

Roofs ripped from buildings, homes underwater, families left devastated by the loss of their loved ones.

Sadly, this is a pattern we have seen over some time, and one which will accelerate unless we take action.

As the representative of one of the Small Island Developing States I met yesterday said to me,

“Tackling climate change is an existential issue for us, if we do not get it right, we will no longer have a place to call home.”

Whether we live in the South or the North, the East or the West, we share one life-giving but fragile planet. And all our futures are intrinsically linked.

COP26 can be a moment where the world comes together to ramp up momentum towards a climate-resilient, zero-carbon economy.

Sending out a message of ambition and hope, that decarbonisation is the future, with huge opportunities for those who are willing to act now.

And, of course, this transition must be fair and inclusive, leaving no-one behind.

We all know that the current commitments made under the Paris Agreement fall far short of what is required.

As the Secretary-General has said we must go further to limit warming to well below 2 degrees, whilst pursuing efforts to achieve 1.5 degrees.

So, we want all countries to submit more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions, committing to further cuts in carbon emissions by 2030.

With all nations committing to reaching net zero emissions as soon as possible.

I want to re-emphasise, this shift must be fair.

The people most affected by climate change are those who have contributed the least and have the fewest resources to adapt.

Developed countries must honour their commitments. Including meeting the 100-billion-dollar goal for climate finance.

At COP26, the world must seek to agree a package which takes forward the Paris Agreement and powers the UN climate process onwards.

We will seek to progress all issues mandated for discussion and I have already heard from many of the countries I have spoken to about their priorities for the negotiations.

Ahead of the Summit, the UK with our partner Italy, will work not just with nations, but also cities, regions, companies, the Multilateral Development Banks, the Development Finance Institutions.

And, very importantly, civil society in all its various forms.

Yesterday I hosted a roundtable with a range of organisations and activists, including representatives from the Wildlife Conservation Society, the UN Foundation and Earth Rising founder Alexandria Villaseño.

By uniting around specific issues, we can spur innovation, scale up solutions and bring down costs.

And there are some areas which need particular action in 2020.

First, adaptation and resilience. Helping people, economies and the environment adapt and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

This was a personal priority for me when I was International Development Secretary.

Working with Egypt and friends from Bangladesh, the Netherlands, Malawi and St Lucia here at the UN, we launched a Call for Action in this area where 118 nations and over 80 organisations committed to raising their ambition.

I met with permanent representatives, the UN and NGOs this morning to discuss how we can translate these political commitments into on-the-ground action.

We know it will be important to consider opportunities to improve responses to climate impacts and access to adaptation finance.

Second, nature. Safeguarding ecosystems, protecting natural habitats and keeping carbon out of the atmosphere.

A million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction, more than ever before in human history.

We cannot meet the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement or adapt the effects of climate change without restoring, protecting and enhancing nature.

We have heard from you, I have heard from you, that there are opportunities to look at environmental regulation around supply chains and channel finance to invest in nature.

The UN Oceans Conference in Lisbon, the 15th Conference on Biological Diversity hosted by China, and of course COP26, offer an opportunity to bend the curve of greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss.

And we will work with China, the United Nations and others to make sure that these global summits complement and support each other.

Third, energy transition. Seizing the massive opportunities of cheaper renewables and storage.

In the last few years, we have seen how alliances like 'Powering Past Coal' can drive momentum.

In the UK the proportion of energy generated from coal has fallen from 40% in 2012 to 5% in 2018.

We all need to invest in the innovation which will help us accelerate the transition to clean energy.

But we also need to help empower developing countries to leapfrog the

polluting options of the past and embrace the clean energy of the future.

In my previous role as International Development Secretary, I saw fantastic examples of companies already doing this.

A UK business called Azuri Technologies is providing solar energy systems to off-grid homes across Africa.

This is a great example of existing opportunities that we need to scale up.

Fourth, is accelerating the move to zero-carbon road transport. By 2040, over half of new car sales worldwide are projected to be electric.

Yet to meet the Paris goals, this needs to happen faster.

By working together, countries and industry can bring forward the date when zero-emissions vehicles will not only be cleaner, but also cheaper, than petrol and diesel.

This will deliver benefits for the climate, and will help tackle air pollution which currently contributes to the death of an estimated 7 million people a year.

And let me be clear, this is not about the UK pointing the finger, we know we also need to do more ourselves.

That is why the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced last month that we would bring forward a ban on selling new petrol, diesel or hybrid cars from 2040 to 2035.

And this week as Business Secretary I announced a multi-million pound investment to design, test and manufacture electric machines in some of the UK's most polluting industries.

And lastly, we need to unleash the finance which will make all of this possible and power the shift to a zero carbon economy.

From solar panels, to electric vehicles and tree planting, it is often finance that turns good intentions into action.

The OECD estimates that we will need nearly 7 trillion dollars a year up to 2030 to meet the Paris Agreement, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

Much of this funding needs will also need to come from the private sector.

Whilst at the Department for International Development I set up the UK's International Development Infrastructure Commission to help corral private sector money, alongside sovereign development funds, into sustainable infrastructure projects.

Following the Commission's recommendations, the UK is now partnering with Uganda, Egypt, Kenya, Ethiopia and Ghana, to design a new facility to plan,

deliver and support funding to a range of infrastructure projects.

Sustainability will be central to these projects, focusing on investments with low carbon emissions and infrastructure that will be resilient to a changing climate.

As COP26 President, I will continue our efforts to mobilise finance for developing countries.

Including asking others to make ambitious future international climate finance commitments.

As the UK has done by doubling our contribution to £11.6 billion over the period from 2021 to 2025.

The Multilateral Development Banks are the largest vehicle for channelling climate finance to developing countries.

They will have a critical role to play, along with the development finance institutions, in the build up to COP26.

But to move from billions to trillions, we will need all finance to align with the Paris Agreement.

Making the spirit of Paris felt in London, New York, Frankfurt, Tokyo, Shanghai and every other financial centre.

Last week, I joined the Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, at the launch of the COP 26 Finance Action Plan.

As Governor Carney noted, private finance is now increasingly focused on the opportunities and risks in the transition to a decarbonised economy.

Every major systemic bank, the world's largest insurers, its biggest pension funds and top asset managers are backing the Taskforce for Climate related Financial Disclosures.

And this has been highlighted to me during the meetings I have had with leading financial organisations.

Achieving net zero will require a whole economy transition.

We have the opportunity to turn climate change into a growth opportunity for the global economy.

In the UK, we have grown our economy by 75% since 1990 whilst cutting emissions by 43% showing, green growth is absolutely possible.

While the list of initiatives I have outlined is not exhaustive, it gives an idea of the scale of the challenge before us. A challenge where we can only succeed together.

As COP26 President I see my role as the custodian of a process. The UK and Italy will be co-hosting the summit, but success at this event will belong to

the whole world.

Alongside my Italian counterpart, we will work with you all to develop more ambitious plans on mitigation, adaptation and finance.

Creating a drumbeat of action in the calendar of international events leading up to COP26.

Last week, I had the opportunity to speak with one of my childhood heroes: the broadcaster and naturalist Sir David Attenborough.

His message was simple. We must act now.

Ladies and gentleman, each of us can help write our planet's future.

I have faith that working together with all of you in a collaborative manner, we will make the right choices.

We owe that to ourselves. And to future generations.

Thank you.