

Upholding the values of the UN Charter is the key to effective responses to global challenges

Mr President, State Councillor, good to see you and thank you for convening this important debate today.

And also my thanks to President Bozkir for sharing your thoughts and, indeed, aspirations.

The United Nations remains the cornerstone, rightly so, of the international system.

As we look at the UN's history, it has mitigated dozens of conflicts. It's saved hundreds of thousands of lives through humanitarian action. It's promoted and protected human rights and freedoms, and safeguarded the principle of sovereign equality and the right to self-determination of peoples.

Seventy-five years on, our world faces new and complex challenges.

International peace and security is challenged by threats that do not recognise borders: climate change, pandemics, famine, organised crime, and terrorism, to list a few.

This calls for a response that crosses borders, just the same.

We must remain true to the universal founding principles of the United Nations and, indeed, the Security Council. The core values of the Charter – peace and security, development, and human rights – are equally important and interdependent.

To ensure the future we all desire, the future we all want, we must be guided by them, and we must defend them.

With these principles in mind, we must also acknowledge that the United Nations needs to adapt and reform in order to respond.

Existing and new global threats and challenges, including climate change, global health, weapons of mass destruction, technology and artificial intelligence are really testing coherence within the UN system.

Therefore, to provide a truly effective response, these areas of our expertise must be fully joined up with humanitarian, development and human rights efforts right across the system.

The Secretary-General's Sustaining Peace agenda lays the foundation for an integrated, coherent UN system that works better together to address the drivers of conflict and build lasting and sustainable peace.

Reform is at the centre of the Secretary-General's agenda for the United Nations, and we should all be working to support its implementation.

Reform, as I'm sure we all agree, is not a one-time action, but rather a permanent attitude that needs to prevail.

We must all support the UN to become more efficient and more productive while it continues to increase transparency.

The UN Human Rights system also has a key and pivotal role to play. Human rights are the heart of the UN Charter, and we must support them as strongly as peace, security, and development. We know that states which respect human rights, territorial integrity, and their obligations to their own people are more prosperous and more resilient.

In an international order that is sometimes fragmented, and characterized by intensifying competition over interests, norms and values, the United Kingdom will continue to place the promotion and protection of human rights at the top of our international priorities.

The transnational challenges I mentioned threaten all of our prosperity and resilience, and need a coordinated approach.

UN peacekeeping exemplifies this. Since the first mission in 1948, you will know that the Security Council has now mandated over 70 peacekeeping operations in more than 50 locations across the globe.

Alongside the many other contributing Member States, the United Kingdom is proud to play an active role, most recently in deploying 300 troops to the UN mission in Mali.

Even more broadly, as COP26 President this November, the United Kingdom will aim to boost international cooperation and global climate finance for the benefit of us all.

We have already pledged over \$15 billion of international climate finance over the next five years, and we will spend a significant proportion of that building resilience in the most vulnerable countries.

Lastly, I would like to touch on the important issue of sanctions. We have been proud to introduce our independent sanctions measures. The UK's measures advance our national security and foreign policy priorities. They hold accountable those responsible for a range of activities, including human rights violations and abuses, and, indeed, corruption. They are legally robust and carefully targeted in scope to minimise any wider impact.

Where we have been unable to agree in the Security Council, the UK has pursued sanctions against the likes of the Syrian regime, the Myanmar junta, perpetrators of sexual violence in Libya, or those working to support DPRK's nuclear programme.

We have worked in concert with others, together, to stand up as a force for good in the world.

As many other colleagues have already reflected, we are still in the midst of a pandemic. COVID-19 affects us all. It continues to require an inclusive, global response.

And as you said, Mr President, at the current time, we all come together to stand in solidarity and friendship with India. But, as we have often heard over this past year, it is important to exemplify the key point that none of us is safe until we are all safe.

Therefore, upholding the values of the United Nations Charter is the key to our effective, united, collaborative response to the quite extraordinary challenges our nations share.

And finally, for all our peace and security, Mr President, we must absolutely work together, collaboratively and inclusively, in a strong, functioning, multilateral UN system.

Thank you, Mr President.