

UK STATEMENT – WORKING SESSION 4

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by Denmark on behalf of the European Union and would like to add to it with some remarks in our national capacity.

The United Kingdom attaches the highest importance to the Rule of Law as a cornerstone of democracy.

We would like to make the following recommendations related to this working session:

- All OSCE states should sign, ratify and implement the UN Convention Against Torture and its Optional Protocol.
- Governments should demonstrate a high degree of political will, persistence and vigilance to prevent torture and to bring perpetrators to justice.
- Governments should ensure that allegations of torture are effectively investigated and prosecuted. There must be no impunity for torturers.
- States should support the strengthening of civil society capacity to monitor torture allegations and ensure strong domestic institutions.

- States should consider the development of national torture prevention strategies.

The UK considers torture to be an abhorrent violation of human rights and dignity, and consistently and unreservedly condemns the practice. Preventing torture and tackling impunity for those who torture are essential components of safeguarding our security; and it is integral to fair legal systems and the rule of law. Torture Prevention is a UK human rights priority. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Minister for Human Rights has an expert advisory group on torture prevention and we have a comprehensive strategy for the Prevention of Torture. To protect against possible complicity in torture, the United Kingdom has strong measures in place to ensure that, when an official has knowledge or belief that torture will occur, this will be reported to Government Ministers and their concerns will be raised with the detaining authority unless doing so might make the situation worse, so far as the detainee is concerned. We support the Swiss Chairmanship's efforts this year to refocus the OSCE's attention on torture prevention and their intention to seek consensus on a Ministerial decision that broadens and strengthens the OSCE responses to this abhorrent crime.

Mr Moderator,

The UK campaigns globally for abolition of the death penalty and it is our longstanding policy to oppose it in all circumstances as a matter of principle. We consider that its use undermines human dignity, that there is no evidence

of its deterrent value, and that any miscarriage of justice leading to its imposition is irreversible and irreparable.

When it comes to the issue of protecting human rights in fighting terrorism, my government is clear. We must deal robustly with the threat of terrorism and extremism in all its forms. In doing so we will ensure that any actions are in line with international obligations and consistent with our proud tradition as an open, free and tolerant nation.

Thank you