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UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Statement for the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on
the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization
Opening Plenary

Tuesday 20 February 2024

Delivered by Colin McIntyre

(check against delivery)

Chair,

The United Kingdom thanks the Bureau of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations (Committee) and the Codification Division of the UN Office of Legal Affairs for their ongoing support to the Committee. We look forward to engaging constructively in this Committee and to seeing a satisfactory outcome to the meeting.

Chair,

With regard to the ongoing items in this Committee's programme of work, as we will elaborate in the relevant Working Group meetings, the United Kingdom does not support the proposals submitted by Libya, Cuba, and Belarus and the Russian Federation, respectively. These proposals duplicative of work being done in other forums in the United Nations and we therefore view these proposals as unnecessary. In particular, the UK supports the role of NGOs in the United Nations. We therefore do not support with the new proposal submitted by the Russian Federation and others regarding the role of NGOs in the work of the United Nations.

Separately, the United Kingdom recognizes the valuable contribution of the Handbook of Peaceful Settlement of Disputes. Whilst we are not yet convinced about the value which would be added by this proposal we remain open to considering additional information on how the Handbook can be updated within existing resources.

Chair,

The United Kingdom notes Iran's proposal on unilateral coercive measures. The United Kingdom is clear that there is no inconsistency or conflict between autonomous

sanctions and the Charter of the United Nations. UK autonomous sanctions are targeted and are focused on deterring, constraining, signalling against, and ultimately changing egregious behaviour of both individuals and entities. This includes in relation to serious human rights violations, weapons proliferation, and corruption. Such sanctions do not target essential food, medicine, medical equipment or assistance or legitimate humanitarian activity. UK autonomous sanctions are lawful, transparent, and allow for due process protections and legal challenge. We would highlight in particular the recent General Licences that we issued to further facilitate aid flows into Syria in response to the devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria. We have consistently opposed or voted against language proposals or resolutions that attempt to misrepresent sanctions. We will continue to do so in order to prevent misinformation about our sanctions being spread in order to advance political agendas.

The United Kingdom also thanks Mexico for its proposal. As in previous years, we remain of the view that this Committee is not the appropriate forum for this discussion.

The United Kingdom views peaceful settlement of disputes as the primary responsibility of the parties to international disputes as provided in Article 33 of the UN Charter. We look forward to listening to the exchange of views in this year's thematic discussion on State practice regarding the use of good offices.

Mr. Chair, the United Kingdom continues to stand with Ukraine and condemns Russia's outrageous attack on Ukraine as a clear breach of international law, and in particular the Charter of the United Nations.

Thank you

