

Joint Oral Statement submitted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission, (A Status NHRIs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

Title: Oral Statement for the Mid-Point of Second Cycle of the United Kingdom's Universal Periodic Review

Mr President,

I welcome the opportunity to present this statement at the mid-point of the second cycle of the United Kingdom's Universal Periodic Review (the UPR). I do so in the name of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission - 'A'-status national human rights institutions of the UK.

We welcome steps taken by the UK and Scottish Governments to tackle hate crime and violence against women and the Northern Irish consultation on two strategies to improve community and race relations.

We encourage the UK to improve the collection and analysis of disaggregated data and human rights indicators to evidence the impact of their strategies. This could inform the development of a UK National Action Plan for Human Rights; building on the experience of Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights.

We would like to draw the Council's attention to potential changes to the UK human rights framework in the UK. However, we believe the Human Rights Act is well-crafted and both reflects and is embedded in our constitutional arrangements. We oppose any reduction to legal human rights protections in the UK. We note the Vienna Declaration and we welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to explore the potential benefits of further incorporation of human rights treaties into the law of Scotland. We call on the UK Government to legislate for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, in accordance with the Good Friday Agreement.

The UK Government has reduced its financial support for the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission by 25% over the last 4 years and proposes further reductions, which may affect its capacity to continue operating in accordance with the Paris Principles and to protect and promote human rights in a jurisdiction emerging from violent conflict.

Thank you Mr President.