

UPR Statement - Transcription

Oral Statement on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission; the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and; the Scottish Human Rights Commission on the UK's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Recommendations.

Dear Mr President, I welcome the opportunity to make this statement on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission.

We would like to thank United Nations Member States for their wide-ranging recommendations to the Government of the United Kingdom to improve compliance with international human rights standards.

There has been progress in some areas, limited progress on others and also we've reported new issues of concern.

The UK Government has introduced legislation for example, to repeal the Human Rights Act and replace it with a Bill of Rights. We are concerned this will weaken human rights protections, will have significant implications for devolution and is incompatible with the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission is concerned that the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill unduly restricts victims' access to courts, breaching human rights law and the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement again.

It is important that the UK has robust National Human Rights Institutions, which are fully compliant with the Paris Principles and adequately resourced to fulfil our mandates to protect human rights.

We welcome the recommendations on economic, social and cultural rights, and encourage the Government to recognise the importance of such rights in light of the current cost-of-living pressures. Devolved administrations must also commit to enhancing protections of such rights to the maximum extent possible.

We remain concerned regarding conditions in immigration detention and the disproportionate policing of some ethnic minority groups and welcome your recommendations to enhance protections for marginalised communities across the UK.

We urge the UK government and devolved administrations to publish clear, actionable plans for implementing your respective recommendations. Enhanced engagement with NHRIs and civil society during the planning and implementation stage can support this.

The three Commissions stand ready to support implementation of recommendations and to hold the UK and devolved governments to account. We will report back to the Council with our independent and expert assessments of any progress made.

Thank you, Mr President.