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# UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION REVIEW FORUM,  
General Debate

20 May 2022

Greg Houston, Head of Migration, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office

*Check against delivery*

Mr President, Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the United Kingdom.

Let me first express my thanks to the UN Network on Migration and the President of the General Assembly for organising this landmark first International Migration Review Forum.

It comes at an important time. Since we came together in Marrakesh, we have seen a perfect storm of COVID, the growing impact of climate change and global conflicts including Russia's war in Ukraine, which has resulted in the worst refugee crisis since World War 2, with 6.4m having fled the country and 8m internally displaced.

All these phenomena – COVID, climate and conflict - affect migrants disproportionately. This is the right moment for us to come together and reaffirm our collective ambition, to make migration safe, orderly and regular, to maximise the huge opportunities it presents for countries and for people, and to mitigate the risks. The United Kingdom is delighted to join this call,

and to add its name to the Progress Declaration [which we look forward to adopting later today].

We have also valued the opportunity to bring together so many governments, experts and civil society, for a truly global dialogue. As outgoing COP Presidents, the UK has particularly valued the emphasis on climate, which we hope will continue through the COP process. We have also been pleased to see the focus on data. As part of our contribution to this Forum, the UK has pledged to share data publicly about migration flows along key global routes.

Mr President,

In the UK, we recognise the enormous contribution that regular migration makes to our economy and our society. Following our departure from the EU, we have transformed our immigration system through our flagship Points Based System. This recognises that skills and talent are found around the globe, allowing anyone to apply from anywhere, based on a transparent system.

We also recognise the ongoing need to establish safe and legal routes for those fleeing conflict. Under our Resettlement Schemes, tens of thousands of people have started new lives in safety in the UK, most recently those arriving from Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine.

However, while we work together to facilitate regular migration, we all know that irregular migration poses a threat to states and to migrants themselves, particularly when they rely on organised criminals to facilitate their journey. We therefore welcome the renewed commitment in the Progress Declaration that we will work together to prevent irregular migration and to eradicate organised immigration crime.

This challenge requires bold and innovative solutions. Our new ground-breaking partnership with Rwanda is an example. We believe this can set a new international standard to address illegal migration, break the model of business smugglers, and asylum system abuse, while offering migrants an opportunity to build prosperous lives in safety.

Thank you.

