United Kingdom: 13 March 2008: ITEM 4: Situations requiring the attention of the Council.

Mr President, the United Kingdom fully supports the statement made by Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

The UK shares the concerns raised by many colleagues in this Council about the situation in Sudan and we look forward to the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Monday. The international community can and must play a strong role in supporting efforts across the range of international organisations to bring lasting peace and security in Sudan. We call on all sides to the conflict in Darfur to end the violence. We strongly support the international community's efforts to monitor and improve the application of human rights throughout Sudan, particularly through this Council's Special Rapporteur. There can be no impunity for the crimes committed. This applies not only in Darfur, but to the whole country.

Somalia

The UK remains seriously concerned about the ongoing situation in Somalia. We support the efforts of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to rebuild their country and promote and protect human rights of the Somali people. The TGF has a responsibility to protect its citizens. They must work to fight impunity, investigate human rights abuses, and bring those responsible to justice. We welcome last summer's National Reconciliation Congress and fully support the new Prime Minister's efforts to promote reconciliation among all Somalis. We sincerely hope these efforts will bring about substantial humanitarian and human rights improvements for the people of Somalia. Given the gravity of the situation, it is more important than ever that this Council continues to focus on the complex challenges

facing Somalia. We must ensure that we continue to support the TFG's efforts, led by the Prime Minister, to improve the human rights situation for all Somalis.

Millions of people are suffering in Zimbabwe. Many have fled the country in desperation. Those who remain face hunger, repression and little hope of improvement under the current regime. The Government of Zimbabwe is responsible for the terrible economic and humanitarian crisis bringing misery to their people. Those who dare to voice their opposition face arbitrary arrest, violence and torture. The people of Zimbabwe remain unable to exercise their right to freedom of expression, assembly and association, which is particularly concerning in the run up to the elections later this month. We hope that this Council will maintain a close watch on conditions in Zimbabwe, particularly during the critical election period.

Mr President, this Council must continue to make all efforts to restore basic dignity and fundamental freedoms to all people in the world for whom they are lacking.

The UK calls on the Government of Iran to do more to protect and promote the human rights of its citizens. We share the concern expressed by Council colleagues today and in the High Level Segment about the increased use of the death penalty, including for juvenile offenders, and the Government of Iran's continued harassment of human rights defenders.

It is clear from the discussion we have had earlier this afternoon that much more progress is needed to build an inclusive political process in Burma, and to

restore human rights and freedoms to which the people of Burma are entitled. We have also heard again this afternoon about the extremely poor human rights situation in the DPRK. We in this Council must not lose our focus on either of these issues. We look forward to the review of these 2 mandates ~~mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Burma and of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the DPRK~~ later in this session. We will strongly support their renewal.

For us the need to maintain the mandates of these two rapporteurs - to continue the excellent work of the two present encumbents - is self evident. Our objective, as always, ~~relate to use~~ is to improve the situation of those ~~suffering from~~ whose rights are being abused. We see that as the prime responsibility of ~~all~~ the council and all its members.