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UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SIXTH COMMITTEE

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY: DEBATE ON ILC RECOMMENDATION

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Delivered by

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Mr Chair,

1. As we come to the end of a two year period for exchanging substantive views on the ILC's draft Articles, the UK wishes to share the following thoughts. First, we thank the Facilitators, Bureau and Secretariat for their commitment and for putting together the excellent programme and modalities both this year and in 2023. Second, we have been struck by the insightful and productive nature of the discussions within the Sixth Committee. It has been refreshing to see so many states involved in substantive and detailed legal dialogue throughout this process.

2. The UK remains strongly supportive of the ILC's work on crimes against humanity and of the progression of the draft Articles into a Convention. We appreciate that there remain differences on the text but they are surmountable and, in our view, can only be resolved through negotiations. As the ILC itself acknowledged, their view should not be the last on this subject. It is right and proper for the Sixth Committee to accept the ILC's recommendation, build upon the progress and momentum achieved over the last two years and work together towards the development of a Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity, on the basis of the Draft Articles we have been discussing in this Committee.

3. We have waited long enough to agree such a convention. We were able to agree frameworks for war crimes and genocide in the aftermath of the Second World War but, unfortunately, crimes against humanity were not addressed at that point. Over 75 years later, the crimes continue. The real cost of these crimes is the devastating impact upon victims, survivors, their families and communities. It is time we signal to those victims and survivors that we are serious about tackling the crimes that affect them and that we can start the serious work of reaching an agreement.

Thank you.