

**UK intervention in Working Session 15 on Human Dimension Activities,
in response to the delegations of the Russian Federation and Belarus**

Mr Moderator, the United Kingdom aligns with the EU statement delivered by Sweden, and did not intend to take the floor in this session, but would not wish the interventions of the Russian Federation and Belarus to pass without comment.

Decision 19/06 taken by the participating States at the Brussels Ministerial concluded a long-running discussion on strengthening the effectiveness of the OSCE, including ODIHR's election activities. It put forward areas to be implemented both by participating States and by the ODIHR. We are satisfied that the OSCE/ODIHR has progressed swiftly and concretely with this implementation programme, and see no need for further discussion on this point.

However, decision 19/06 also called on participating States to address deficiencies in the implementation of their commitments, and we feel that this meeting has again highlighted the need for this to be the focus of our discussions.

Mr Moderator, the UK repeats its full support, like the majority of participating States, for the election activities of ODIHR.

With regard to Human Rights Defenders, we believe that the intervention of Belarus highlights that this too should be an area for further discussion amongst participating States. We look forward to discussion of this topic here at the HDIM tomorrow afternoon, and to discussions in the context of a draft ministerial council decision on Human Rights Defenders.