Thank you Mr President,

As corruption efforts stagnate worldwide, human rights and democracy are also under assault. Protecting human rights is crucial in the fight against corruption. The global COVID-19 pandemic has been used in many countries as an excuse to curtail basic freedoms and side-step important checks and balances.

The pandemic presented unprecedented challenges for countries in managing the global COVID‑19 pandemic. For every government, this has required whole-of-government responses to the pandemic that have focused on public health. This will have inevitably had an effect on corruption and the subsequent enjoyment of human rights – the impact of which remains unclear.

We must acknowledge that the speed and scale of economic support provided by governments in response to the pandemic may have increased the risk of corruption.

The UK believes transparency can play a major role in preventing corruption and promoting good governance. However, as we have seen from the Covid-19 pandemic, transparency alone is not enough to drive change. The role of civil society organisations are crucial in the fight against corruption. CSOs are not only able to deliver vital services but also elevate the voices of marginalised people, playing a critical friend role to governments – holding them to account but also positively contributing to the policy making process. Governments should make strong commitments to ensure the transparency and integrity in COVID‑19 response programmes.

We have placed a high priority on the importance of media freedom and the critical role that investigative journalism plays in educating and alerting people to corruption as well as bringing to light issues which need addressing. We believe it is only through listening to and working with the media and civil society that we can take positive steps to tackle corruption and to drive further reform.

Thank you