**COMMITTEE:** UNHRC

**AGENDA**: Preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalism globally

**COUNTRY**: United Kingdom

Good morning delegates,

**Main roots of the problem**

**Radicalism** challenges the legitimacy of established norms and policies. However it does not, in itself, lead to **violence.** For example, it includes individuals that reject the values of a society but adhere to the law and attempt to bring about change through political dialogue. Whether radical communities are brewing grounds for violent extremism - or important partners for prevention, is currently the topic of an intense political debate. As with the concept of 'terrorism', there is no universally agreed definition of the term 'violent extremism'; indeed, somewhat confusingly, the terms can sometimes be employed interchangeably. There are, however, a number of definitions which have been developed at the national, regional and international levels.

**What UN has done**

A recent United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) Report on good practices and lessons learned on how protecting and promoting human rights contribute to preventing and countering violent extremism examined existing State practice on policies and measures governing 'violent extremism' (General Assembly, Human Rights Council report A/HRC/33/29).

**Steps taken by UK**

Over generations, we in United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland have built something extraordinary: a successful multi-racial, multi-faith democracy. Our country today is more vibrant, buoyant and diverse than ever before in our history. There is still more to be done to defeat racism, promote genuine equality of opportunity and build a more cohesive society. But I believe it is right to say that United Kingdom is on the rise, strong and growing stronger with each new day.

Our success is underpinned by our distinct values – the liberty we cherish, the rights we enjoy and the democratic institutions that help protect them. Our freedoms have been hard-won and throughout our long history, we have come together to defeat those who sought to undermine them, to threaten our values and way of life.

Alongside our values, we have together forged an increasingly inclusive identity. In our country, people should have no difficulty in identifying themselves as a proud Sikh, or Jew, or Muslim, Hindu or Christian.

United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland, has taken successful initiatives to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalism. In the past, I believe governments made the wrong choice. Whether in the face of Islamist or neo-Nazi extremism, we were too tolerant of intolerance, too afraid to cause offence. We seemed to lack the strength and resolve to stand up for what is right, even when the damage being done by extremists was all too clear.

The publication of this Counter-Extremism Strategy is a clear signal of the choice we make today. In government, we have already overhauled our approach so that it tackles both violent and non-violent extremism. We know that terrorism is really a symptom; ideology is the root cause. But the stakes are now rising. The menace radicalism and the sophisticated efforts of extremists to groom and radicalise young people demands a response of a different magnitude.