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UK Explanation of Vote on the draft resolution on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. Delivered at the 63rd Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Thank you, Mr President.

The United Kingdom remains firmly committed to the promotion and protection of the human rights of all individuals, including peasants and other people working in rural areas. We recognise the important contribution that rural communities make to food security, sustainable development and poverty reduction, and we support efforts to address the particular challenges they may face.

The United Kingdom recognises in particular the vital role of smallholder, family and subsistence farmers. Through the UK's international development partnerships, the UK has supported agricultural productivity, climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods for rural communities across the world helping farmers, particularly women and small-scale producers, to improve incomes and adapt to changing environmental and economic conditions.

The UK has engaged constructively in discussions on draft resolution L22 and we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the delegation of Bolivia for the open and collaborative way in which they led the negotiation process.

However, we have longstanding concerns regarding the framework underpinning this resolution: the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas.

Provisions of the Declaration of the Rights of Peasants seek to create new categories of rights for one specific group. This runs counter to one of the key principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights - the principle of Universality. Article 1 of the UDHR, which underpins all international human rights law, states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. We all have the same rights because we are all human. We break from that foundational principle to the detriment of us all.

We therefore continue to be unable to support the mandate of a mechanism focused on the implementation of an instrument that we cannot support. The United Kingdom therefore requests a vote on this resolution and will abstain.

The United Kingdom nevertheless values continued dialogue on the human rights challenges faced by rural populations and we remain ready to work with all partners in support of efforts to promote equal access to rights, opportunities and services for all, without discrimination

Thank you Mr President.

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