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The Foreign Secretary welcomes publication of UN Association report and stresses importance of the United Nations

The United Nations Association (UNA-UK) report *In Larger Freedom in the UK* was launched at a meeting in Parliament on 28 November, following a speech by the UN Secretary-General's Director of Communications, Edward Mortimer. The report is the product of a unique series of UK-wide public debates funded by the Foreign Office and organised by UNA-UK to gather public and expert feedback on proposals for UN reform.

Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has welcomed the report's publication. "This report", he states, "illustrates one simple fact. For most people, the United Nations remains the only global organisation able to tackle the challenges that we face today."

At the London launch, FCO Minister Lord Triesman said, "I congratulate UNA in organising the public debates on UN reform this year, and for producing such a comprehensive report. UNA generated informed and stimulating debates on the United Nations and the agenda for reform. There are a remarkable number of UN experts in Britain, who generously, via UNA, pass on this advice and expertise to the Government. That is why UNA is, and will remain, a key partner for this Government."

Sam Daws, Executive Director of UNA-UK and former First Officer in the UN Secretary-General's Office, commended the leadership displayed by the British government at the September 2005 UN World Summit. "However," he stated, "the real challenges lie ahead. The UK must now take a lead in ensuring that the pledges made at the Summit are implemented and that progress is made on poverty reduction, non-proliferation and climate change." He added that "the report demonstrates that the expectations of the public have been raised. We have a historic opportunity, and a moral imperative, to build a strong, credible and effective UN. We should not miss this chance".

Notes for Editors

1. The debates proved to be an effective platform for the public and members of civil society to express their views on the UN reform agenda. Ten regional debates were held from March to July 2005: in London, Cambridge, Leeds, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Belfast, Aberystwyth, Manchester, Bath and Southampton. Six smaller sub-regional debates were also held, and a number of written consultation exercises were organised with prominent UN-watching civil society organisations.
2. The report, which incorporates a foreword from the Foreign Secretary, is available on UNA's website at www.una-uk.org. Physical copies can be obtained by contacting Veronica Lie on 020 7766 3541 or lie@una-uk.org.
3. The United Nations Association of the UK is a non-governmental organisation and independent of the United Nations. It is the UK's leading authority on the UN and a membership organisation with an active network of branches throughout the UK.