Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

G8 Foreign Ministers' meeting statement

2013-04-11

Introduction

G8 Foreign Ministers met in London on 10-11 April. The G8 represents a group of nations with a broad range of global interests and with a collective responsibility and opportunity to use its influence to address some of the most pressing issues in the world.

Foreign Ministers addressed a number of international issues, challenges and opportunities that impact on global peace, security and prosperity. Beyond exchanging views and coordinating actions on the pressing foreign policy issues of the day, they made a number of commitments as set out below and in the separate Declaration on the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict

Foreign Ministers endorsed the Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict. They called for urgent action to address comprehensively the culture of impunity and to hold perpetrators to account for acts of sexual violence committed in armed conflict. Ministers emphasised the need to promote justice and accountability for sexual violence in armed conflict by strengthening the existing framework for prosecution, and to provide more long-term support to prevent and respond to sexual violence in armed conflict, as part of broader development and humanitarian efforts. They confirmed that rape and other forms of serious sexual violence in armed conflict are war crimes and also constitute grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions affecting large numbers of women and girls as well as men and boys. In addition to the physical and psychological trauma, sexual violence when used to deliberately target civilians or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations is a violation of international law, which can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of peace and security. The G8 has an important role in advancing the implementation of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and Children and Armed Conflict, including by tackling conflict-related sexual violence and advancing the participation of women in peace building and transition processes, as Ministers acknowledged in Washington in April 2012.

Africa

G8 Foreign Ministers noted, as Africa commemorates the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (now the African Union), the sense of optimism in the light of progress in economic growth, political stability, and democratisation over recent years in many parts of the African continent. The African Union and African Regional organisations are increasingly resolved to intensify regional cooperation and to ensure peace and security on the continent.

Many African states have taken great strides in reducing poverty and generating sustainable development and long-term growth. G8 Ministers supported the aims of the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V), to take place in Yokohama in June. G8 Ministers supported the deepening and expansion of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition.

North and West Africa

G8 Foreign Ministers stressed the importance of building resilience and good governance across North and West Africa in order to address deep-seated security, economic and development challenges, and in particular to address the needs of the Sahel region. They reaffirmed their commitment to promoting tolerance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They welcomed the work of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States in support of initiatives aimed at building economic opportunity and prosperity, and expressed the hope that this might take place in a co-ordinated fashion across the wider region, including North Africa. The Ministers emphasised the need for a co-ordinated response to address the immediate humanitarian challenges in the region. They also stressed the need to accelerate actions to build long-term resilience in the face of environmental challenges and endemic food insecurity, particularly in the Sahel. The Ministers encouraged the United Nations and International Financial Institutions to adopt coherent and co-ordinated policies to address the development needs and the resilience of the Sahel, and, in this regard, called for rapid progress to finalise and implement the UN Integrated Regional Strategy for the Sahel.

The Ministers specifically endorsed the need for a regional response to a wide range of security challenges, including: restricting the proliferation and illicit trafficking of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons and MANPADS; stemming the flows of illicit finance generated by organised criminality; building capacity in security and justice sectors; improving aviation and border security; encouraging counter-terrorism partnerships, including on crisis response and counter-radicalisation; and building contingency planning capacity in the private sector.

The G8 Ministers commended the efforts undertaken at the conference on women’s leadership in the Sahel region (Brussels, 9 April) to advance gender equality and women’s leadership as a contribution to resolving the crisis in the Sahel.

Mali

G8 Foreign Ministers restated their support for the territorial integrity of Mali and their condemnation of the violence by separatist and terrorist groups. Ministers expressed their support for the efforts of France and its African partners to re-assert Malian state control over its territory. The Ministers emphasised the strong international consensus in the United Nations Security Council, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States for this action. The Ministers agreed to support a successful handover of stabilisation activity to AFISMA which has now successfully deployed to Mali and, as soon as conditions permit, to a multi-dimensional UN Operation. The Ministers welcomed the establishment of the EU Training Mission to train the Malian Armed Forces. They emphasised the need for all actors in Mali to recognise their obligations under international law and their responsibilities to meet international human rights standards. They also called on the international community to support short-term humanitarian needs in Mali, as well as contribute towards resolving longer term development challenges.

The Ministers welcomed the decision of the Malian authorities in January 2013 to adopt the Road Map and Action Plan to transition to democracy and to hold elections in July 2013. The Ministers welcomed the Malian Government's commitment and noted that meaningful progress must be made, in parallel with preparations for elections, on institutional reform, accountability, promotion and protection of human rights, including prosecution of human rights abuses in national courts, taking forward co-operation with the ICC and the UN Independent Expert on Mali, and dialogue and reconciliation. Ministers therefore welcomed the establishment by the Malian Government of the National Council for Dialogue and Reconciliation on 6 March 2013, and expressed their wish that the Malian authorities take forward the process of inclusive dialogue with the necessary urgency. They urged an end to the settling of disputes through violence, and called on all Malians to engage in dialogue as the only sustainable, long-term solution to instability.

Somalia

G8 Foreign Ministers welcomed the significant progress made in Somalia over the past 18 months on security, political transition and humanitarian conditions and recognised the considerable support provided by the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), African Union strategic partners, Troop Contributing Countries, the United Nations, European Union and other international donors. G8 Ministers underlined the need for continued early international support to the new Somali Government. The G8 noted that the second Somalia Conference in London, to be co-hosted with the Somali Government in May, aims to endorse a series of Somali-led plans to rebuild the security forces, the judiciary, and public financial management systems. It will also support the Federal Government of Somalia in establishing effective federal structures for Somalia. The Special Conference on Somalia in the margins of the TICAD V in Japan in May will focus on the need for socio-economic development from the

angle of human security. This will be followed in September by an EU conference seeking to encompass a broader set of Somali priorities for rebuilding the state and establishing a new political order. It will do so on the basis of a Compact, in line with the New Deal Principles for Fragile States. All three conferences will place the new Somali Government firmly in the lead on rebuilding Somalia.

Somalia: IFI re-engagement

Ministers agreed to provide high-level political support to the process of Somalia's re-engagement with the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, while taking into account the policies and procedures of the International Financial Institutions with regard to countries in fragile situations, including security considerations. Ministers strongly encouraged the Somali Government in its efforts to this end. They recognised that the economic and institutional expertise and broader support these organisations can provide is necessary to help implement reforms that could promote macroeconomic stability, fiscal sustainability, the potential for inclusive economic growth, an enabling environment for Foreign Direct Investment, and the expansion of trade.

In parallel, Ministers urged the Somali Government to demonstrate particular political commitment to public financial management and to strengthening transparency and accountability in order to lay the foundations for IFI re-engagement. Ministers acknowledged that full IFI engagement and the rebuilding of Somalia was a long-term endeavour that would require sustained high-level political support.

Somalia: Counter-terrorism

Al Shabaab and foreign fighters present in Somalia remain a major terrorist threat to Somali and international interests. G8 Foreign Ministers stressed the importance of continued co-ordinated international assistance to develop the rule of law, Somalia's security, financial and judicial systems (including on border security, anti-money laundering and countering terrorist financing), in line with the Rabat principles on human rights. Foreign Ministers acknowledged the importance of the Somali Government's work to promote reconciliation, de-mobilise and re-integrate those Al Shabaab fighters who have renounced violence, and pledged to support these efforts. They reiterated the importance of a comprehensive political settlement in Somalia, including clarity on relations between central and regional authorities, as a means of reducing the operating space for those who advocate violence and terror.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

G8 Foreign Ministers expressed concern about the security and humanitarian situation in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and were particularly concerned by reports of continuing killings of civilians, the forced recruitment of children into armed conflict, and sexual violence. They condemned such acts of violence and called on all parties to adhere to

their obligations under international humanitarian law and respect human rights and human dignity. They called on all countries of the region to fight impunity and ensure that those suspected of serious violations be brought to justice, including through cooperation with the ICC.

Ministers welcomed the recent signature of the regional Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework by the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and other regional countries, as well as the signing by the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community, and the United Nations as guarantors. The Ministers urged all parties to the Framework to work together to implement their commitments, and to play a constructive role in building long term stability and prosperity in eastern DRC. This should involve addressing the underlying causes of conflict, and improving the lives of ordinary people there. The Ministers welcomed the appointment of the UN Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region of Africa to oversee the implementation of the Peace Security and Cooperation Framework and urged the Special Envoy to establish a comprehensive political process, building on the Framework, that includes all relevant stakeholders and addresses the underlying regional, security, economic, and governance issues.

The Ministers welcomed UNSCR 2098 which renews the mandate of the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC to enable it to better carry out its mandate to protect civilians, neutralise armed groups, and build peace in the region, including through the deployment of an intervention brigade.

Sudan and South Sudan

G8 Foreign Ministers noted the economic, security and human rights challenges that face Sudan and South Sudan, and underlined the need to implement the September 2012 Addis Ababa agreements, and meet the deadlines set out in March 2013. In particular, Ministers welcomed progress towards the establishment of the safe demilitarised border zone, deployment of the joint border verification and monitoring mechanism, a resumption of the production and export of oil from South Sudan, and called for a process to determine the final status of Abyei. Ministers noted the need for Sudan to improve respect for human rights while addressing the causes of its conflicts. They noted with concern that in Sudan, the conflict in Darfur has entered its tenth year, with insecurity continuing. They called for faster implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, and called for all groups to engage in the peace process. Ministers expressed alarm at the humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states. They called on the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North to enter into talks immediately to agree a ceasefire and full humanitarian access. Ministers commended and offered their continued support to the role of the African Union, in particular the work of the High-Level Implementation Panel.

Ministers regretted the loss of life of Indian peacekeepers and a number of civilians, in Jonglei, South Sudan, on 9 April and offered their condolences to the Governments of India and South Sudan.

The Middle East

Syria

G8 Foreign Ministers expressed deep concerns about the increasing human tragedy of the conflict in Syria. They were appalled that more than 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict and that there are now more than a million Syrian refugees registered by the UNHCR in neighbouring countries, and more than two million internally displaced persons in Syria. They acknowledged the importance of neighbouring countries' efforts in hosting refugees, and stressed the need for the international community to help the most affected neighbouring countries. They called on all countries to join with them in maximising their contributions to the latest UN appeals and to provide them with direct support in order to help them face this challenging situation.

Against this desperate background, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to supporting a Syrian-led political transition, and the work of Joint UN and Arab League Special Representative Brahimi, based on the principles set out in the Geneva Communiqué. This transition should meet the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and enable them to democratically and independently determine their own future. They called for the UN Security Council to remain seized of this matter. The Ministers condemned in the strongest possible terms all human rights violations and abuses in Syria and called on all sides to respect international humanitarian and human rights law, noting the particular responsibility of the Syrian authorities in this regard. They welcomed efforts to document all crimes for the purposes of future accountability.

The Ministers condemned the ongoing use of heavy weapons against residential areas and reaffirm their view that any use of chemical weapons would demand a serious international response. To this end, the Ministers reaffirmed the importance of safeguarding sites where any such weapons are held.

The humanitarian situation in Syria is deplorable and continues to worsen. The Ministers called for greater humanitarian assistance and for improved and safe access to the Syrian people by humanitarian agencies in co-ordination with all parties to the conflict.

Middle East Peace Process (MEPP)

G8 Foreign Ministers confirmed their commitment to a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. They agreed on the urgent need to make progress on the Middle

East Peace Process towards this goal and underscored the need for a major international effort, involving all relevant parties, including the Quartet, to drive the peace process forward.

The Ministers welcomed President Obama's visit to the region and his statement that peace between Israelis and Palestinians is necessary, just and possible. They urged both sides to show the bold political leadership needed to achieve peace, to take the necessary steps to build trust and to work towards the resumption of negotiations without preconditions.

The Ministers stressed that a long term solution to this conflict can be achieved only through direct negotiations, taking note of the 23 September 2011 statement of the Middle East Quartet. Ministers called on parties to refrain from unilateral actions and to create an atmosphere conducive to peace. They strongly reaffirmed that unilateral actions by either party cannot prejudge the outcome of negotiations.

Ministers expressed grave concerns about the poor state of the Palestinian economy, and the impact this has on Palestinian state-building efforts. Ministers affirmed their support for the Palestinian Authority and encouraged Arab countries, as well as emerging economies, to extend the fullest assistance possible to revitalising the Palestinian economy.

The Ministers welcomed the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire of 21 November 2012 which ended hostilities in Gaza and southern Israel, condemned rocket attacks in contravention of this and urged all sides to uphold their commitments.

Deauville Partnership with Arab Countries in Transition

The Deauville Partnership with Arab Countries in Transition has played an important role in bringing together Middle Eastern and North African countries in transition, regional partner countries, G8 members, and International Financial Institutions in an effective and pragmatic partnership to promote successful economic and political transition.

G8 Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the six Deauville Partnership transition countries (Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, Libya and Yemen) recognising progress made since the start of the Arab Spring and noting the enduring partnership of the G8 in continuing to address the difficulties they continue to face. Deauville transition countries are encouraged to seek the broadest possible consensus on the political transition in their countries. Ministers reiterated their belief that democratic process, open societies and open economies were essential to create confidence, consolidate political reform and achieve inclusive economic growth. Ministers recalled the principles which are fundamental to the long term security and prosperity of the Middle East and North Africa, and underline our capacity to partner together toward shared goals. Those principles include the responsibilities to reject violence and protect all persons living within their territory regardless of faith, ethnicity, or gender; to promote tolerance and freedom of expression; freedom of religion and belief, including practicing the freedom of religion in safety; and to uphold the rule of law and security.

Ministers welcomed the continued focus of the Deauville Partnership in 2013 on open economies and inclusive economic growth, supporting job creation and increasing economic opportunities for youth and women, and recognised the important role of the International Financial Institutions in delivering this. Areas of focus will include promoting enhanced trade and investment, facilitating access to capital markets, progress on asset recovery, international exchanges and the fight against corruption. Ministers expressed support for the planned high-level conference in London in September, which will showcase investment opportunities in transition countries, and the steps being taken by governments to improve the investment climate. Supporting the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the region will be central to economic development and growth. Implementation of SME Action Plans will take place in parallel with a new initiative to provide mentoring support to SMEs. The G8 will also promote a new focus on encouraging women's participation in business and the economy. Ministers acknowledged the UK's co-chairmanship of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), and encouraged efforts to engage Deauville Partnership countries in OGP activities.

Ministers welcomed the operationalisation of the Transition Fund and the initiation of the first tranche of high quality projects which will provide technical assistance to help strengthen public institutions and build capacity to advance country-led reforms. There was recognition of the high level of demand from the transition countries for further support of this kind, and Ministers encouraged partners to increase contributions to ensure the initial capitalisation of $250 million is met. Ministers showed support for the ongoing work of extending the geographical mandate of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in order to make available greater investment programmes in the region.

As stated in the last Ministerial meeting on the Deauville Partnership with Arab Countries in Transition (New York, 28th September), G8 members will build on the G8's accountability efforts and report on progress achieved in the Partnership.

The Ministers welcomed the upcoming meeting on April 19th of Deauville Partnership Finance Ministers and look forward to continued work by their Finance counterparts and the International Financial Institutions to provide macroeconomic frameworks for bilateral and multilateral assistance.

Foreign Ministers underlined the critical role of independent civil society organisations in an inclusive political process that responds to the aspirations of the region's citizens. Ministers reaffirmed the consensus Tunis Declaration reached at the 2012 Forum for the Future, which brings together governments, civil society and private sector leaders to engage in dialogue on social, political and economic reform. They welcomed the UK and Egyptian co-chairing of the process in 2013.

Yemen

G8 Foreign Ministers re-affirmed their strong support for the political transition process in Yemen, including the start of the National Dialogue Conference, as outlined in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative and the UN Implementation Plan. They encouraged all Yemeni parties to contribute in a positive and meaningful way, and urged all parties to comply with UNSCRs 2014 and 2051. They welcomed the generous pledges made by the Friends of Yemen to underpin the transition and urged donors to deliver rapidly the $7.8bn pledged, which will benefit the lives of ordinary Yemenis.

Ministers recognised the stability of Yemen remains essential for the stability of the wider region, and the maintenance of international security. Ministers commended the Yemeni Government's steps to advance security sector reform and ongoing efforts to counter the continued threat from AQ-AP and other violent extremists.

Non Proliferation and Disarmament

G8 Foreign Ministers agreed that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery continues to be a major threat to international peace and security. Addressing it is one of the G8's top priorities. G8 countries are all committed to seeking a safer world for all and to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in a way that promotes international security, peace and undiminished security for all in accordance with the goals of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty. The illicit trade in conventional weapons also represents a serious challenge, causing great suffering and threatening regional stability.

Ministers welcomed the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the United Nations General Assembly on 2 April. Efficient implementation of the Treaty will contribute to saving lives, reducing human suffering, protecting human rights, preventing the diversion of weapons to the illegal market and combating terrorism, while upholding the legitimate trade in arms, vital for national defence and security.

G8 Foreign Ministers continue their commitment to efforts that strengthen and enhance long-term sustainability, stability, safety, and security in outer space. G8 Foreign Ministers welcomed the

statement agreed by the Non-Proliferation Directors' Group

and published today.

Ministers recalled the decision at the 2010 NPT Review Conference to hold a Conference on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons, as well as other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. They regretted that it was not convened in 2012. They strongly supported the continued efforts of the facilitator of the Conference and welcomed the commitment of the co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution. The

Ministers called upon all States concerned to make all efforts necessary for the preparation and convening of the Conference in the nearest future.

Iran

G8 Foreign Ministers expressed their deep concern regarding Iran's continuing nuclear and ballistic missile activities in violation of numerous UN Security Council and IAEA Board of Governors resolutions.

Following the 5-6 April substantive round of negotiations in Almaty, Kazakhstan with Iran and the E3+3 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union High Representative), the Ministers reaffirmed their desire for a peaceful and negotiated resolution to the nuclear issue, noting that talks cannot continue indefinitely. They noted that the positions of the E3+3 and Iran remain far apart and called on Iran to engage urgently, actively and constructively in the diplomatic process with the E3+3, and to cooperate with the IAEA to resolve the serious concerns of the international community and to demonstrate that its nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful. Ministers further reaffirmed that, in line with the United Nations Security Council's approved dual track approach, Iran has the ability to avoid further isolation and improve its situation only if it promptly addresses the concerns of the international community.

Ministers urged Iran to comply with international obligations to uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion, and end interference with the media, arbitrary executions, torture and other restrictions placed on rights and freedoms. They further urged Iran to cooperate constructively with all relevant UN human rights mechanisms. A visit by the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Iran would be a step in this direction.

Ministers also urged Iran to play a more constructive role in supporting regional security and to distance itself from all acts of terrorism and terrorist groups.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

G8 Foreign Ministers condemned in the strongest possible terms the continued development of its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), including its uranium enrichment. This is in direct violation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1718, 1874, 2087 and 2094.

Ministers noted that the DPRK's nuclear test on 12 February 2013 - the third since 2006 - and its launches using ballistic missile technology on 13 April 2012 and 12 December 2012 seriously undermine regional stability, jeopardise the prospects for lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula and threaten international peace and security. Ministers welcomed UNSCR 2094, adopted unanimously on 7 March 2013, to respond to the DPRK's nuclear test and

emphasized the importance of full implementation of the resolution by the international community. Ministers supported the commitment in the resolution to strengthen the current sanctions regime and take further significant measures in the event of a further launch or nuclear test by the DPRK. Ministers also expressed concern about the DPRK's announcement that it intends to re-open its Yongbyon nuclear facility.

Ministers confirmed their commitment to the goal of lasting peace and the verifiable denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. They condemned DPRK's current aggressive rhetoric and confirmed that this will only serve to further isolate the DPRK. They urged the DPRK to engage in credible and authentic multilateral talks on denuclearisation, abide by its obligations under all relevant UNSCRs and its commitments under the September 19, 2005, Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks, abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and refrain from further provocative acts.

Ministers expressed concerns over the systematic and widespread human rights violations in the DPRK, highlighted the importance of improving inter-Korean relations and emphasised the need to address humanitarian issues including abductions and family reunions. They emphasized that the DPRK must address these issues and cooperate fully with all relevant UN mechanisms.

Burma/Myanmar

Ministers noted with satisfaction that since President Thein Sein took office in March 2011, the Government of Burma/Myanmar has, with the support of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, opposition groups and parliament, initiated a number of remarkable political and economic reforms toward strengthening democracy and the rule of law, improving human rights (including the release of political prisoners and freedom of the press), expanding economic activity and engaging with the international community. Ministers welcomed the progress that has been made on addressing national reconciliation and encouraged the Government of Burma/Myanmar and other actors, including ethnic groups, women and political parties, to continue on this path in particular in view of the complex situation in Kachin State and unresolved tensions in Rakhine State. They also called on the Burma/Myanmar Government to take further steps to end all violence, to respect the rights of ethnic and religious minorities and to pursue inclusive peace negotiations.

Ministers underlined their firm intention to continue to support ongoing political and economic reforms, to help the authorities tackle the important challenges that remain, and to work closely with other donors to ensure our assistance is used effectively to address the needs of the people of Burma/Myanmar in line with the Naypyitaw Accord for Effective Development Cooperation.

Ministers welcomed the resulting new opportunities for investment and development, as well as the prospects for greater transparency, accountability and prosperity. They believed that new investments and development programmes should operate consistently with international environmental, business, and human rights principles and guidelines with the goal of benefiting the people. They welcomed the Government's commitment to responsible investment in Burma/Myanmar in line with the UN Global Compact and Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Afghanistan

G8 Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their collective commitment to support Afghanistan on the path to peace and stability as it enters the 'transformation decade'. Ministers noted that Afghanistan would continue to face many challenges, including in the field of security, and reiterated international support to the Afghan Government in overcoming them.

They welcomed the pledges of long-term support to Afghanistan by the international community, including at the Bonn Conference, the NATO Chicago Summit meetings and the Tokyo Conference. They agreed that all must meet their commitments under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. Ministers noted the importance of protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, including religious freedom, particularly of women, children and minorities, and of expanding opportunities for them to contribute to Afghanistan's future.

The Ministers noted progress made on transition of responsibility for security. Ministers looked forward to the ANSF taking the nationwide lead for security in mid-2013. Ministers encouraged the Afghan Government to make progress on its National Drug Control Strategy, which balances law enforcement action with capacity-building and the development of sustainable alternative livelihoods. Ministers endorsed the continuing need for an international response to tackling more effectively illicit drug production, trade, trafficking and dealing with the threat of terrorism. Money from the trafficking of narcotics continues to fund insurgent activity.

The Ministers welcomed the announcement of the date for Presidential and Provincial elections in Afghanistan. It is important that the Government of Afghanistan and relevant authorities continue to work with all stakeholders and international organisations to prepare for inclusive, credible and transparent elections.

The Ministers fully supported an inclusive Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process that is based on the principles of renunciation of violence, cutting ties with all terrorist groups and respect for the Afghan Constitution including its human rights provisions, notably on the rights of women, in line with the Kabul Communiqué and the Bonn Conference Conclusions. The Ministers welcome and support efforts to strengthen regional co-operation.

Transnational challenges and opportunities

Cyber

G8 Foreign Ministers agreed that a safe, open and accessible Internet is an essential tool for our societies and economies. They agreed that it promotes prosperity, freedom, democracy and human rights. They also acknowledged the importance of the Internet in helping all nations to benefit from the potential for economic growth and innovation. Ministers recognised that this potential is reliant on availability, trust and security – which are essential for developed and developing countries alike.

Ministers noted that, since the Deauville G8 Declaration on a Renewed Commitment for Freedom and Democracy in 2011, there had been a wide range of welcome initiatives in various international fora. They highlighted in particular the work of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (UNGGE). Ministers encouraged the UNGGE to reach consensus on substantive recommendations on norms of responsible state behaviour and confidence building measures, including capacity building, as an essential element of international stability.

Ministers affirmed that international law is relevant in the digital world as it is off-line. They further affirmed the need to take steps to promote transparency and confidence building measures in order to reduce the risk of misperceptions between states.

Ministers agreed on the importance of international capacity building efforts to enhance trust, strengthen the fight against cyber crime and improve the security of the global digital environment. They noted that capacity building required the full participation of governments, business and civil society. Ministers agreed to promote and advance international cyber security capacity building initiatives to encourage a wide range of partners, including industry, to deliver increased and more effective capacity building across the globe.

Ministers agreed that cyber security capacity-building in this area needs to be embedded in the wider context of the economic growth and social benefits derived from the global digital economy. They also agreed to ensure that these efforts are implemented in a way which promotes openness, trust and security, stability and the rule of law in the digital realm.

Ministers welcomed the efforts by the Roma-Lyon High Tech Crime Sub Group (HTCSG) to strengthen and expand the G8 24/7 Network of Contact Points, including through a sustained training initiative. Ministers encouraged all future Presidencies to continue these efforts.

Climate Change

Climate change remains a key global challenge which, if not controlled, would have dramatic consequences not only on the environment but also on economic prosperity. G8 Ministers recognised climate change as a contributing factor to increased economic and security risks

globally. The G8 agreed to consider means to better respond to this challenge and its associated risks, recalling that international climate policy and sustainable economic development are mutually reinforcing. Officials from interested G8 countries will meet to consider the potential consequences of climate change and associated environmental and resource stresses as a contributing factor to increased security risks globally, and report to Foreign Ministers.

Ministers recognised the ambitious measures already undertaken to reduce greenhouse gases, noting that action needs to continue and intensify as a matter of urgency. Ministers remain committed to long term efforts with a view to limiting effectively the increase in global average temperature below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, consistent with science. The G8 remain fully committed to the UNFCCC process; to achieving, by 2015, a new climate change agreement, applicable to all Parties, which will come into effect and be implemented from 2020; to increase mitigation ambition in the pre-2020 timeframe, including through international cooperative initiatives such as the Climate and Clean Air Coalition; and to the developed countries' goal of mobilising jointly USD 100bn per year by 2020, from a wide variety of public and private sources, in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation. Ministers stressed the importance of transparency in the UNFCCC process. Measurement, reporting and verification will play a key role with respect to mitigation, adaptation and international climate finance flows in order to measure progress towards the achievement of our goals.

Maritime Security

G8 Foreign Ministers recognised the importance of maritime security as a critical enabler of regional stability, economic development, trade and international prosperity. Maritime insecurity affects the international community as a whole and, as such, can only be effectively addressed through a comprehensive national and international approach. Ministers remain committed to the freedom of navigation, unimpeded lawful commerce, and the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with applicable international law including UNCLOS.

Ministers, firmly condemning acts of piracy and other maritime crime, expressed their continued commitment to pursue international cooperation to combat these threats remaining consistent with international law and internationally recognised principles of jurisdiction in international waters. Ministers noted the importance of continuing work to develop and support regional maritime security capability, increase capacity to prosecute maritime crime, and maximise economic potential from the maritime domain through frameworks like the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, Friends of the Gulf of Guinea and Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia.

Human Rights

G8 Foreign Ministers emphasised the importance of promoting and protecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of women, freedom of religion or belief, and the freedoms of expression and association.

Ministers reiterated the need to accelerate efforts to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in order to ensure their equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Ministers expressed concern for the continuing practice of early and forced marriage.

Counter Terrorism

G8 Foreign Ministers reiterated their absolute condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. They noted the evolving nature of the terrorist threat, which was increasingly fragmented and geographically diverse, and the increasing use in some areas of the world of kidnapping for ransom as a growing source of terrorist financing. Ministers remained concerned about the threat posed by al-Qaeda and affiliated groups in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and other countries, and noted the increased threat of terrorism in North and West Africa, as demonstrated by recent events in Algeria, Mali and Nigeria; they also noted new radicalisation trends and related terrorist risks; which will be examined in more detail by the G8 Roma-Lyon Group and its expert-level sub-groups dealing with transnational organised crime and terrorism.

Ministers reiterated the importance of continued international support for those countries facing a terrorist threat, including through assistance to build the capacity of their security and justice systems to identify, disrupt and prosecute terrorist activity, while respecting human rights and humanitarian law and ensuring safe operations of foreign investment which is a valuable source of growth for those countries. They noted the efforts of the United Nations and its Security Council, and of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, in this regard. They further emphasised the importance of regional co-operation in tackling terrorist groups that move across borders and exploit local and regional issues to their own ends. Ministers underlined the need for further implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, based on the comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism combining security, diplomatic and development efforts to counter violent extremism and to deprive the terrorists of resources and support and to tackle the conditions and grievances that terrorists seek to exploit.

Illicit Drugs

G8 Foreign Ministers are concerned by the scale of the problem of illicit drug production, trade and trafficking and its harmful consequences for individuals, societies and States, as well as regional and international stability. They reiterated their commitment to the balanced and evidence based approach set out in the three United Nations conventions on the control

of drugs (1961, 1971 and 1988). They recognised the need for increased political impetus and a stronger mobilisation of the international community within that legal framework and support further steps to implement the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and the UN Convention against Corruption.

Ministers underlined the crucial importance of intensified cooperation among States on the basis of common and shared responsibility and a balanced comprehensive approach tackling both demand and supply of illicit drugs.

Further information

Read the

G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict

Link to PDF version of the

G8 Foreign Ministers statement

Find out more about the

G8 Foreign Ministers' Meeting

Read more about the

Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative

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G8 Declaration on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament for 2013

More information on the

Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative at our tumblr

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Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/g8-foreign-ministers-meeting-statement