

International Assistance: UK Statement

Mr. President,

1. I would like to support the remarks made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States and add a few comments in a national capacity.
2. As a member of the Selection Committee of the Voluntary Trust Fund the UK witnessed at first hand the time and effort that Ambassador Biontino and the ATT Secretariat put into setting up the Voluntary Trust Fund, including gaining agreement to detailed Administrative Rules, obtaining financial contributions and overseeing the first call for proposals and dispersal of funds. Given that the VTF was only agreed last September, to have secured almost \$2m of funding and attracted 21 applications was an impressive performance (I remember discussions when we were concerned whether we would get four or five applications). Getting to a position where it was possible to support 17 of those applications was also an achievement worth noting.
3. Given that it was the first year of the VTF there are inevitably lessons to be learned and it is encouraging that these are addressed in the report. In terms of the process itself, the demands put on the secretariat were extensive and the level of support needed by a number of the bids is something that needs to be considered. It is important to encourage states to make use of the VTF and ensure that their bidding is as effective as possible. However we also need to continue to ensure that the bids the VTF supports are credible with meaningful – and attainable – objectives. We must not get to a position where we are supporting bids just because the money is there.
4. We also need to ensure that the VTF does not duplicate the work of other programmes (including EU), but operates in a complementary (and, where possible, coordinated) way. It should provide focused support which makes a difference. On this it has made a very good start. I look forward to discussing ways in which we can make further use of this important contribution to International Assistance.