



Distr.: General  
28 June 2012

Original: English

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
20-22 June 2012

Agenda item 8  
General debate

**Statement by the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in exercise of the right of reply to the statement by the Chair of the delegation of Argentina in the general debate on 22 June 2012**

1. The United Kingdom has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.
2. The British Government attaches great importance to the principle of self-determination as set out in Article 1.2 of the Charter of the United Nations and article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. That principle underlies our position on the Falkland Islands. There can be no negotiations on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless and until such time as the islanders so wish.
3. The democratically elected representatives of the Falkland Islands once again expressed their own views clearly when they visited the United Nations for the session of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples held in 2012. They asked the Committee to recognize that they, like any other people, were entitled to exercise the right of self-determination. They reiterated the historical facts that the Falkland Islands had no indigenous people, and that no civilian population was removed prior to their people settling on the islands over eight generations ago. They confirmed that they are and have been the only people of the Falkland Islands and they did not wish for any change in the status of the Islands.
4. The United Kingdom supports the Falkland Islands Government's legitimate decision to explore for hydrocarbons in Falkland Islands waters in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and article 1, paragraph 2, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
5. The United Kingdom notes that the Government of the Republic of Argentina has announced plans for hydrocarbons exploration in the South Atlantic. Both the Falkland Islands Government and the Government of the Republic of Argentina have environmental responsibilities related to their exploration. The Falkland



Islands Government takes its responsibilities very seriously. They have funded external reviews of assessments by United Kingdom institutions such as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Scottish Association for Marine Science. The Falkland Islands Government has also sought the expertise of the United Kingdom's Department of Energy and Climate Change, the Health and Safety Executive and the British Geological Survey to regulate the environmental impacts and health and safety of all offshore hydrocarbons exploration. These environmental and safety standards are the same as those required in United Kingdom waters and are some of the most rigorous in the world.

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