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General debate

**Letter dated 26 September 2012 from the Permanent
Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President
of the General Assembly**

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the written statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by Ms. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, President of the Argentine Republic, on 25 September 2012 in the General Assembly (see annex).

I should be most grateful if you could arrange to have the text of the present letter and the annexed statement circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 8.

(Signed) Mark **Lyall Grant**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 26 September 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the President of the Argentine Republic in the general debate on 25 September 2012

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands. The United Kingdom 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.

The United Kingdom's relationship with all its overseas Territories is a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to determine its own future.

The democratically elected representatives of the Falkland Islands once again expressed their own views clearly when they visited the United Nations for this year's debate in the Special Committee of 24 on Decolonization. They asked the Committee and all its member States to respect the principle of self-determination, which is a universal human right, and the Falkland Islanders' legal entitlement to exercise their right. They reiterated the historical facts that the Falkland Islands had no indigenous people and that no civilian population was expelled prior to their ancestors settling on the Islands. They confirmed that the Falkland Islands have been peacefully settled for over a century and half by their ancestors and others from many parts of the world, and that they have no desire other than to be left to live in peace. They lamented the Republic of Argentina's attempts to ignore their right of self-determination under the Charter of the United Nations. The representatives also expressed their disappointment after the President of Argentina refused to accept an invitation from them inviting the Argentine Government to meet and listen to the views of the Falkland Islands people.

The United Kingdom continues to believe that there are many opportunities for cooperation in the South Atlantic. However, in recent years the Republic of Argentina has rejected these opportunities. It withdrew from cooperation on the South Atlantic Fisheries Commission, and in 2007 repudiated the 1996 Joint Declaration on Cooperation over Offshore Activities in the South West Atlantic. The Republic of Argentina placed a ban on charter flights travelling to the Islands in 2003. It has also introduced domestic legislation to restrict shipping to the Islands and penalize companies that wish to do business in or with the Falkland Islands.

The United Kingdom has maintained an unchanged defensive military posture in the South Atlantic for 30 years. This includes routine military exercises. The United Kingdom remains fully committed to defending the rights of the people of the Falkland Islands to determine their own political, social and economic future. A referendum to be held by the Falkland Islands Government in 2013 will make the Islanders' wishes clear to the international community.