Thank you, Chair.

It's great to be with you, and I thank the UN for bringing us together for this important discussion.

It is beyond any doubt how important the Asian and Pacific neighbourhood is and will be for our world.

Home to some of the world's fastest-growing economies, it is set to be worth nearly half of global GDP by 2050.

Naturally, this means we cannot drive robust global growth without building strong partnerships in the region.

Indeed, our shared prosperity will depend on it.

That's why the UK's commitment to global development goes beyond development…

…and recognises that true progress requires peace, trade and investment.

And that is precisely what the UK means by a free and open Indo-Pacific.

A region governed by law and rules, and able to trade and grow.

I hardly need to say that we are living in a time of profound change…
…and addressing emerging challenges means we must work together more closely than we ever have.

Now, all of us bring unique strengths and perspectives.

Asia and the Pacific are diverse in political thinking, economic approaches, and ecosystems.

But far from being a weakness, it can be a source of strength.

Your diversity brings invaluable experience, which will be critical as we find new ways of working together.

And multilateralism is key to building a modern, sustainable development approach that benefits everyone.

The UK deeply values the role the UN and our multilateral partners play.

At the same time, we recognise that we cannot achieve our climate or sustainable development goals without improving gender equality and inclusivity.

Reform and innovation are crucial for development, but they must not come at the cost of our shared values...
…and climate-smart investments can play a crucial role in this process.

Laos, for example, faces high exposure to extreme weather due to climate change, impacting everything from flooding to crop yields.

That's why the UK is supporting Laos in building climate resilience, helping the Asian Development Bank integrate climate and disaster resilience into urban policies,…
…tackling food insecurity, and improving sustainable water management in the Mekong River.

Of course, we recognise there are challenges too.

We hear the concerns from the Pacific neighbourhoods about accessing climate finance…
…and we remain committed to ensuring fair access for all, especially the most vulnerable.

That's why we continue to champion Small Island Developing States and want to boost private investment to ensure growth opportunities for all.

As an ASEAN dialogue partner, the UK is also strengthening collaborative efforts in addressing mutual challenges.

Last month, I had the privilege of launching the Seed to Tree reforestation project in Malaysia, part of the ASEAN-UK Green Transition Fund…
…which supports green growth and sustainability across the region.

Another example is the Green Investment Catalyst, a £2 million project, delivered through UN ESCAP [*S-CAP*], that will drive foreign investment into key green sector projects.

Finally, I cannot end without mentioning the devastating earthquake in Myanmar, which clearly emphasises the need for ongoing humanitarian response and robust climate resilience measures.

The UK has been glad to contribute almost £25 million to the humanitarian effort so far…
…and we're also integrating climate resilience into our development support.

That includes strengthening local partners' capacity to response to emergencies…
… and improving climate-smart seed production so that seeds can grow despite unpredictable weather.

Yet for any of these efforts to truly succeed, we must work together as one team.

Because it is only through partnership and collaboration that we can shape a sustainable, prosperous future for us all.