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UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SIXTH COMMITTEE,
UNGA79, AGENDA ITEM 86

PROTECTION OF PERSONS IN THE EVENT OF DISASTERS – CLUSTER 3

8 October 2024

Delivered by Greg Reisman

Check against delivery

1. Thank you chair.
2. The UK will now comment on draft Articles 7 and 12.

Draft Article 7

3. Starting with draft Article 7, the UK recognises the importance of international cooperation in responding to disasters and that the fundamentals of such cooperation are set out in the Annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182. However, the scope of such a duty may merit further consideration, including the actors caught by such a duty and how it would apply in practice.

Draft Article 12

5. As set out in our comments last year, the UK is in favour of the flexibility afforded by draft Article 12, noting that there will be a range of forms of requests and responses depending on the State, the recipient of the request and the context. The UK is also supportive of the fact that, as noted by a number of states last year, draft Article 12(1) is permissive and does not create a legal duty to offer assistance.
6. The UK would again suggest that the flexibility provided in Article 13(3) in respect of affected State responses to offers of assistance is mirrored in paragraph (2) of draft Article 12, by the inclusion of the words “whenever possible” before “inform the affected State of its reply”.

7. The UK also notes that, as set out in our comments last year, this draft Article does not make reference to existing UN mechanisms and institutions, and we would be inclined to include more detailed language in this draft Article, to acknowledge the leadership and coordination role that those institutions have, including in relation to offers of assistance and response to requests.