



United Kingdom Mission
to the United Nations

One Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
(885 Second Avenue)
New York, NY 10017

Email: uk@un.int
http://twitter.com/UKUN_NewYork

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SIXTH COMMITTEE,
UNGA78, AGENDA ITEM 86

PROTECTION OF PERSONS IN THE EVENT OF DISASTERS – CLUSTER 3

Delivered by Jonathan Hollis

1. The UK will now comment on draft Articles 7, 8 and 12 in turn.

Draft Article 7

2. 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. While the draft Articles are aligned with many of the principles enshrined in that resolution, they do not specifically acknowledge the central and unique role of the UN in leading and coordinating disaster response, nor consider how this intersects with the role of the affected State. The UK would be inclined towards specifically acknowledging the role of the UN in this draft Article, to emphasise the importance of cooperation with the UN.
3. Noting that international cooperation is often challenging in disaster response, the UK would suggest that cooperation and coordination, in particular with UN agencies, should be considered by States in advance of a disaster as a form of preparation. As we have noted in respect of draft Article 9, disaster preparedness could be given greater prominence in these draft Articles, and considering how to coordinate with the UN system is one aspect of this.

Draft Article 8

4. Draft Article 8 provides a helpful non-exhaustive list of the principal areas in which international cooperation may be appropriate. Noting the importance of coordination, the UK suggests consideration is given to whether this article could address the principles of good coordination between States and Assisting actors.

Draft Article 12

5. Regarding draft Article 12, which deals with offers of external assistance, the UK notes that it does not create any formal mechanisms for making requests for assistance, or responding. The UK is in favour of the flexibility of this approach, 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. In this regard, we would suggest that the flexibility provided in Article 13(2) 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”.
6. The UK notes that this draft Article does not make reference to existing UN mechanisms and institutions, and 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.