

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN
IRELAND

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SIXTH
COMMITTEE, UNGA78

THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

Agenda item 83

16 OCTOBER 2023

Delivered by Melina Lito

Mr Chair,

I would like to start by thanking the Rule of Law Unit and the Assistant Secretary General for introducing this segment on the rule of law activities at the national and international levels.

We align with the statement from the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law and share in welcoming the New Vision of the Secretary General for the Rule of Law.

The United Kingdom is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We believe that these are the absolute foundations on which open, stable and prosperous societies thrive.

Mr Chair,

The United Kingdom has used technology positively to embrace the challenges presented by the pandemic, including ensuring the right to access justice by broadening the use of virtual hearings in courts and tribunals. Our lessons from the pandemic have helped us build a common practice and guidelines on ensuring fair remote trials free from intimidation or malicious influence. This has included providing legal representation

during remote hearings, including those conducted from prisons or detention facilities.

As the world continues to move forward from the pandemic, technology can help us ensure access to justice for vulnerable groups. For instance, it can help ensure access for those who rely solely on mobile devices.

Mr Chair,

The United Kingdom is proud to have championed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. We see technology as a key driver in promoting and providing effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The United Kingdom legal sector has a long and valued history of building partnerships with our international counterparts to share experiences and learn from each other. The United Kingdom has been engaging with international counterparts on their migration to online services, share lessons and experiences that improve the experience for end users.

Using technology to advance access to justice for all is also important for UK citizens. This is demonstrated by the Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022, which established a new judicially

led body to create a new procedural code for digital justice. This body also oversees and encourages the adoption of digital procedures in courts, tribunals and wider dispute resolution.

In addition, our Ministry of Justice has been taking forward a programme on digitalisation of the court service through which we exchange expertise on court reform and e-court projects with partner countries.

Mr Chair,

While the United Kingdom continues to embrace technology advancement and the opportunities this brings to both governments and citizens in ensuring access to justice for all, we must also guard against those wishing to use the developments in technology to cause harm or undermine the rule of law.

The United Kingdom's Online Safety Bill is ground-breaking legislation. Once in place, this Bill, will ensure that the evolving cyberspace will be a safer place for UK citizens by ensuring social media companies are responsible for the content that is published on their sites.

The Bill will provide access to justice for those that previously struggled to find a suitable remedy for online abuses that would

be considered crimes offline. The United Kingdom will also seek to ensure better protection for children and violence against women and girls through this Bill.

Thank you, Mr Chair.