

UN Human Rights Council 41: UK Closing Statement

The UN Human Rights Council concluded its 41st session today, passing resolutions on Syria, DRC, Philippines, Eritrea, Ukraine and Belarus, a number of resolutions that seek to protect the rights of women and girls, LGBT people, and on a range of other important issues.

The Human Rights Council is a vitally important part of the rules-based international system and the UK's support for its work, and that of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and her Office, remains steadfast.

I was pleased that during this session the UK was able to co-sponsor resolutions on Child, Early and Forced Marriage, Discrimination Against Women, Equal Pay and Violence Against Women and Girls. I am proud of the UK's strong leadership in the protection and promotion of gender equality and the rights of all women and girls. The UK also strongly supported the renewal of the mandate of the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights; human rights are universal, and apply equally to all people, everywhere. The international community must work to address all forms of discrimination, be it on the basis of gender, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Syria

I welcome the adoption of the latest Syria resolution by the Council. As the regime continues its indiscriminate offensive in Idlib, it is right that the Council continues to draw attention to the immense human suffering there. All parties must return to the agreed ceasefire, act to protect civilians, and abide by international law. The Council has also rightly drawn attention to the plight of detained and missing Syrians and their families' search for the truth. I welcome the UN Special Envoy for Syria's focus on this vital issue, and call on the international community to cooperate with his efforts.

DRC

On DRC, I welcome the renewal of the UN Team of Experts' mandate. I encourage the DRC authorities to continue to cooperate with the UN Team of Experts to address the serious human rights situation in the DRC, to bring justice to the victims of human rights violations and abuses, including sexual violence, and to fully engage in the reconciliation process in order to bring peace and stability to the Kasais.

Ukraine

I welcome the adoption of the resolution on Cooperation and Assistance to Ukraine in the field of human rights. The continued technical assistance and

monitoring mission, provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, enables the critical work of monitoring human rights and helps to promote and protect human rights in Ukraine, including illegally annexed Crimea.

Philippines

I urge the Government of Philippines to engage constructively with the issues raised in the resolution on the human rights situation there.

Sudan

The UK highlighted longstanding concern at the human rights situation in Sudan, and condemned recent violence against peaceful protestors. We welcome important political progress and the opportunity presented by the recent political agreement towards civilian rule. Human rights must be respected throughout this transition and beyond, including the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Those responsible for past violations and abuses must be held to account, and we welcome the commitment to a transparent investigation. The September session of the Council should consider what assistance Sudan needs to ensure human rights are protected.

Elsewhere, I welcome the renewal of the mandates of the Special Rapporteurs on Belarus and Eritrea.

Finally, I want to reiterate my support for the work of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and thank her for her report into the murder of Jamal Khashoggi.

The work of the Human Rights Council is vital in bringing states together to protect and promote universal human rights around the world. The UK government plays, and will continue to play, an active role at the Council and will continue to support its efforts to hold those who violate or abuse human rights to account.

Climate change risk management

Expertise and analysis from the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) can help government manage climate change-related financial risks. We are building networks across government to look at how climate scenario analysis can be used as a risk management tool.

GAD and other organisations recognise the need for continued work on risk management around climate change. At the department's recent Forum for Public Actuaries event, the Prudential Regulation Authority and the Pensions Regulator spoke about how they're taking steps to ensure insurance companies, financial institutions and pension funds manage climate change risks appropriately.

Scenario analysis

Scenario analysis is a helpful tool to highlight these risks even where they are highly uncertain, such as the exact nature of the risks from the physical impacts of a changing climate and the route we will take to transition to a low carbon economy. It entails constructing possible narratives for how the future might unfold and assessing their impacts on the risks facing an organisation or government.

Actuarial expertise

GAD's lead actuary in climate change issues, Rich Haines said: "We've been exploring a range of scenarios, including pathways for global actions expected to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. We've also looked at a pathway in line with currently announced policies of governments around the world, expected to lead to global warming of more like 3 degrees.

"These scenarios have very different implications for how the economy may evolve, and how global temperature rises, and carbon use reduction may impact on a range of factors which impact on financial risk, such as asset returns and life expectancy."

Improving understanding

As GAD marks its centenary year, we reflect on our achievements over the past 100 years and look forward to the increasing range of areas where we use our expertise to assist our clients. This includes climate change where there are financial (and other) risks to individuals, businesses and government and uncertainty over possible outcomes.

Considering implications from different climate scenarios can break down seemingly intractable problems into more focused considerations and help improve understanding. This can help decision makers consider the possible range of impacts, build resilience and respond quickly to changing circumstances. We expect this sort of analysis will be helpful to large asset holders such as pension funds and financial institutions, but also to government departments responsible for managing risks to the country's future finances.

[Official Statistics: Latest official statistics on pre-movement and post-](#)

movement testing for tuberculosis (TB) in cattle in Great Britain – quarterly

Quarterly statistics on tuberculosis (TB) movement tests on cattle in Great Britain.

UN Human Rights Council 41: general comment on Ukraine

Thank you, Mr President,

The United Kingdom would like to make a General Comment on L9 entitled Cooperation with and assistance to Ukraine in the field of human rights.

The UK welcomes Ukraine's constructive engagement with this Council.

Ukraine's open engagement with this Council and with OHCHR in the country continues to be exemplary. We welcome Ukraine's continued willingness to participate openly and constructively in HRC debates and allow for an open and frank discussion on their human rights challenges at the HRC. We recognise that it is not easy to open up for such scrutiny and discussion on the human rights situation in one's own country on a regular basis and we commend the Government of Ukraine for its transparency and willingness to discuss its situation so openly.

In this balanced and technical draft we have before us, Ukraine asks for the continuation of OHCHR assistance to their country in the field of human rights, including OHCHR assessments and regular dialogues at the HRC, for another two years. We welcome Ukraine's wish to extend this assistance for another two years – a clear demonstration of their readiness to find long-term solutions and of their commitment to improving their human rights situation, particularly in the context of the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

The UK has co-sponsored this draft resolution. We urge all members of the HRC to join us in supporting Ukraine's request for assistance and cooperation.

Thank you, Mr President.

Thank you message as £1 billion A66 consultation closes

More than 2,000 people attended public consultation events across Cumbria, County Durham and North Yorkshire with others giving their views online and by post. Comments were received on a variety of options which include constructing bypasses around key villages, building new lanes alongside existing sections of the road, and improving busy junctions at Kemplay Bank roundabout in Penrith and with the A67 at Barnard Castle.

The consultation was launched on Thursday 16 May by Transport Secretary Chris Grayling and closed last night (Thursday 11 July). Public consultation events with plans of the potential options on show were held in Penrith, Appleby, Gilling West, Richmond and Barnard Castle.

Highways England senior project manager Matt Townsend said:

The general mood across the 20 consultation events was enthusiasm for the project which is encouraging – but it was also reassuring that people felt they could raise any concerns or suggestions and provide us with genuine local intelligence and insight.

We'd particularly like to thank the communities which hosted the consultation events for their hospitality and warm welcome – we've had nothing but enthusiasm and support.

The plan now is to take a detailed look at all the feedback and identify any themes or consistent concerns and feed that into the process as we work to bring forward our preferred options for each section of the road.

Highways England is developing plans to fully dual the remaining six single carriageway sections, which total 18 miles of the complete 50 mile route. This will provide improved benefits to journey time reliability, safety, network resilience and connectivity for nearby villages and towns.

The A66 is both a nationally important road, linking Penrith in Cumbria with Scotch Corner in North Yorkshire, and a key regional route. It is a hugely important route for freight traffic across the United Kingdom and as the main link to the Lake District and North Pennines to the East of England.

Upgrading the A66 route will provide enormous benefits to people living locally but will also change the way people travel round the UK, improving connections from Scotland to the east coast of England and Belfast's port traffic, via Stranrear, onwards to ports including Hull and Felixstowe.

An announcement on the preferred route will be made next spring – accompanied by a report on this year's consultation and further statutory consultation

and planning stages.

More information is available on [our website](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.