



UK Mission to the
United Nations
in Geneva

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Note Verbale No. 038

Geneva, 20 January 2026

The Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honour to submit its response to communication AL GBR 22/2025 further to the letter dated 26 November 2025 from the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights.

The Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland avails itself of this opportunity to renew to Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.



Geneva, 20 January 2026

Special Procedures Branch

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights



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United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Response to Special Procedure communication AL GBR 22 2025 from the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights

Thank you for your letter of 26 November 2025. To begin with, allow me to reaffirm the UK Government's resolute commitment to international development and to remaining a leading global voice in the development space. We do this as part of our global responsibility and leadership, based on the common challenges we share with other countries, and because the prosperity and security of the British people are inseparable from events beyond our borders.

In recent years, the world has been reshaped by global instability, including Russian aggression in Ukraine. Conflicts overseas are undermining security and prosperity at home. That's why this Government is committed to investing in the UK's national security and, to enable a necessary increase in defence spending, the Government made the decision last year to reduce our Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget.

We have consistently affirmed the UK's commitment to international development and to restoring spending of 0.7% of GNI on ODA when the fiscal circumstances allow. The UK will use a combination of technical expertise, convening power and diplomacy alongside our targeted financial support to maximise our impact. Regardless of how much we spend, we have also been clear we must modernise our approach to development to reflect the changing global context. We will bring UK expertise and investment to where it is needed most, including tackling the climate and nature crisis, global health solutions and humanitarian support. I will now address your specific questions.

1. Could you please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the concerns that have been mentioned above?

We are modernising our approach to international development, to work in a different and more impactful way, reflecting changes in the global context. That's why, at the heart of our new approach are four fundamental shifts.



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First, moving **from donor to investor**, partnering with countries to unlock growth, jobs and trade through innovative finance and private sector investment.

Second, moving **from service delivery to system support**, helping countries build their own education, health and economic systems – so they can thrive without aid.

Third, moving **from grants to expertise**, leveraging UK strengths, like our world-class universities, the City of London, the Met Office, HMRC, education, health and tech sectors.

Fourth, moving **from International Intervention to Local Leadership**, working increasingly in partnership with local actors rather than through internationally driven interventions.

We are prioritising strategic and aligned multilateral organisations in the UK's ODA budget, while driving reform of the multilateral system to strengthen its most critical parts – humanitarian, health, climate, and global finance – to help lower-income countries sustain their progress and become self-sufficient.

The Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) are the largest source of public development finance and enable us to achieve a level of scale and impact that is not possible through acting alone. The UK co-hosted with Ghana the 17th replenishment of the African Development Fund (ADF) pledging event in London in December 2025. Donor pledges including the UK's pledge of £650m as the largest donor and an unprecedented nearly \$200m from African countries, has allowed the ADF to raise a total of \$11bn, of which \$2.5 billion will be raised on capital markets - including on the London Stock Exchange.

The UK will remain a leading humanitarian actor, including through our continued bilateral support to Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan. We will support displaced people in or near countries of origin, and we will build resilience to future shocks to reduce caseloads while helping to meet today's needs.

Tackling climate change and restoring nature will remain at the heart of the UK's approach to development. The UK is on track to deliver £11.6bn in ICF by the end of FY25/26, of which £3bn should be nature finance. Our International Climate Finance projects have helped 137 million people adapt to the effects of climate change, provided 89 million people with improved access to clean energy, and helped to mobilise billions in private investment.

Our support to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, will save one and quarter million lives, but also create British jobs and growth through sharing of expertise and prevent the spread of dangerous infectious diseases. Our new investment of £1.25bn in Gavi's 2026–2030



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programme will support the immunisation of up to 500 million children, saving up to 8 million lives.

As confirmed by the Equalities Impact Assessment we have published, our allocation of the FCDO's ODA budget in 2025/26 has not caused disproportionate negative impacts on women and girls and people living with disabilities. We will continue to strengthen actions to help mitigate some of the negative impacts on equalities, including by putting women and girls at the heart of everything we do.

2. Could you kindly provide information on the rationale behind your Excellency's Government's decision to reduce Official Development Assistance (ODA) substantially, and whether this is intended to be temporary?

The UK faces a period of profound change, with conflicts overseas undermining security and prosperity at home. In recent years, the world has been reshaped by global instability, including Russian aggression in Ukraine. The Government is committed to investing in the UK's national security and will increase spending on defence to 2.5% of GDP from April 2027.

The increase in defence spending will be funded by reducing ODA to the equivalent of 0.3% of GNI by 2027. This was a necessary choice which reflects the evolving nature of threats and the changes required to meet them whilst maintaining economic stability. The Government is committed to returning to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA when the fiscal circumstances allow.

As set out above, the UK is committed to international development and to remaining a leading global voice in the development space. Less money does not mean less action; the UK will use a combination of technical expertise, convening power and diplomacy alongside our targeted financial support to maximise our impact.

3. Please describe the measures taken by your Excellency's Government to mitigate the adverse impacts of the decrease and termination of Official Development Assistance (ODA) on climate action and human rights, in line with its international obligations.

The FCDO produced and published the equality impact assessment (EIA) for 2025/26 ODA programme allocations on [22 July 2025](#).

The FCDO is working through detailed decisions on how the ODA budget will be targeted from 2026/27 to 2028/29, and will publish these in due course, together with the supporting EIA.



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We remain committed to our international work on human rights. In light of decisions on ODA, we're finding new, innovative ways to support change, working in greater partnership with local actors and tailoring our work for maximum impact. The development of new FCDO Centres of Expertise will support the delivery of human rights objectives in individual countries, providing practical help and advice to Posts and partners. . Our commitment is not just to fund and support projects but to share what we learn and show the impact we're making.

The UK remains committed to providing International Climate Finance (ICF) now and in the future, and to playing our part alongside other developed countries and climate finance providers to deliver our international commitments. Climate and nature are priorities for our ODA budget, alongside humanitarian and health. Through our ICF, the UK will continue to play a crucial role in addressing the global challenge of climate change internationally.

The UK is on track to deliver £11.6bn in ICF by the end of FY25/26, of which £3bn should be nature finance. To support the most vulnerable who are experiencing the worst impacts of climate change, we are also on track to triple our funding for adaptation from £500m in 2019 to £1.5bn in 2025.

Detailed decisions on how the ODA budget will be used over the coming years, and what that means for UK ICF, are being worked through as part of ongoing departmental resource allocation processes.

4. Please indicate if your Excellency's Government is considering a review or reversal of the decision to reduce or terminate ODA in the short term

The Government is committed to returning to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA as soon as fiscal circumstances allow. The Government will return to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA when the Office for Budget Responsibility's (OBR) fiscal forecast confirms that, on a sustainable basis, the UK is no longer borrowing for day-to-day spending and underlying debt is falling (the ODA fiscal tests). The government will continue to monitor future forecasts closely, and each year will review and confirm, in accordance with the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015, whether a return to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA is possible against the latest fiscal forecast. The OBR's latest forecast shows that the ODA fiscal tests are not due to be met within this Parliament (i.e. no earlier than August 2029).

5. What measures your Excellency's Government will take to uphold security and development through human rights amidst the cuts in ODA?

Our development efforts have never been solely about our aid budget. Peace and security, effective governance, access to private investment, remittance flows, efficient



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tax systems, and trade opportunities - all essential foundations for countries to achieve self-reliance - require us to mobilise the full range of resources and expertise across government, our science and technology sector, the City of London, our universities and beyond. We will do this through our modernised approach to international development, outlined above, the strategic targeting of financial resources, and ongoing diplomatic effort at all levels.