



UK Mission
Geneva

**RESPONSE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE CALL FOR INPUT FROM THE SPECIAL
RAPPOREUR ON THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS RELATING
TO THE ENJOYMENT OF A SAFE, CLEAN, HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE
ENVIRONMENT**

The United Kingdom recognises the serious threat that climate change and associated biodiversity loss and damage to ecosystems pose to our planet.

As part of our commitment to ambitious climate action, we are proud to be hosting the UNFCCC's 26th Conference of the Parties in November 2021 in partnership with Italy.

We urge every country to come forward with enhanced nationally determined contributions that will help us collectively meet the objectives of the 2015 Paris Agreement, and to take concrete steps to build resilience against climate impacts.

We recognise that climate change can undermine the enjoyment of human rights. At the same time, it is vitally important that States comply with their human rights obligations when taking action to protect the environment and respond to climate change.

Regarding the possible recognition of a human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, the UK recalls the declaration made on signature (and confirmed upon ratification) of the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention):

"The United Kingdom understands the references in article 1 and the seventh preambular paragraph of this Convention to the 'right' of every person 'to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being' to express an aspiration which motivated the negotiation of this Convention and which is shared fully by the United Kingdom. The legal rights which each Party undertakes to guarantee under article 1 are limited to the rights of access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters in accordance with the provisions of this Convention."

10 June 2020