

# UN Human Rights Council 50: UK statement during panel discussion on COVID-19

World news story

The UK delivered a statement during the panel discussion on good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.



Thank you, Mr President,

The United Kingdom welcomes today's discussion.

The UK is committed to unlocking the opportunities provided by existing and emerging digital technologies. If developed responsibly and with the necessary safeguards in place, new technologies can enable major advances in tackling global and social challenges – from pandemic preparedness to enhancing a quality education for all.

Alongside digital technologies, the UK recognises the importance of a free, open, inclusive and interoperable Internet to enable individuals to enjoy their human rights, exercise their fundamental freedoms and hold governments

to account.

We here today must take steps to tackle digital divides, to ensure that no one is left behind in a digital world. Working through digital development interventions like our Digital Access Programme, the UK supports inclusive, affordable, safe and secure digital connectivity and digital skills development. We promote sustainable models for individuals from underserved and marginalised groups to realise their economic, social, civil and political rights online.

The benefits of technological innovation should extend to all people, with governments, industry or individuals working together to make them a reality. New technologies and their governance arrangements must be developed responsibly, in compliance with international human rights law, and supported by multi-stakeholder engagement.

Mr President,

What more can be done to ensure greater and more sustainable access to digital technologies so that more people may benefit?

Published 28 June 2022