Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to begin by answering question 29 on the use of terms.

The UK generally uses the term capacity building in the cyber context. In our view, capacity building is the developing and strengthening of the skills, processes and resources that States need to counter cybercrime effectively.

For us, technical assistance focuses more on short-term interventions, which does not necessarily include the transfer of knowledge or skills.

We believe it is only by sustainably developing the capacity, knowledge and skills of all States that we can most effectively prevent and combat cybercrime. Capacity building is therefore the right term for this treaty.

Madam Chair, one of the worst things that can come from capacity building efforts is unfulfilled expectations, leading to disappointment, as well as wasted time, effort and money. This is a risk that we need to be mindful of. We consider this risk can be reduced where efforts are informed by the needs of requesting states.

It is important to the UK that any support we provide is consistent with our values. For example, any project we undertake must consider and incorporate gender equality considerations. As we have consistently
heard from experts, different genders experience cybercrime differently. Cybercrime policies, practices and legal frameworks that ignore gender may exacerbate pre-existing problems, and ultimately result in less effective outcomes.

Similarly, we think capacity building works best when it is carried out in a way that is inclusive of the private sector, academia, and civil society organisations. Our response to question 31 is, therefore, that multistakeholders are indispensable to effective capacity building efforts. Their role is not optional. Relevant skills and expertise are in short supply and high demand. We would be foolish to overlook the expertise held by those outside of governments, as we work to ensure that all member states have the capacity to implement this treaty.

As to what this convention should cover, we propose at least four key areas:

1. First, the development of robust domestic policies, strategies and legislation;

2. Second, the upskilling of stakeholders in both the public and private sectors, from the judiciary and law enforcement, to NGOs and individual citizens;

3. Third, strengthening cooperation across borders, such as sharing threat assessments and techniques to prevent cybercrime, including through regional and international organisations;
4. And fourth, raising public awareness through providing information and tips for online safety and security.

I would like to mention two projects that do some of this well. The UK has supported States to put in place robust domestic frameworks and legislation through projects with the UNODC, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the Council of Europe. To strengthen cooperation across borders, in 2021 we launched a joint project with Interpol, to set up a new cyber operations hub in Africa to improve intelligence sharing.

Finally, I would like to turn to the questions about the needs of developing countries, the delivery of capacity building, and whether there should be a specific provision aimed at assisting states with establishing a 24/7 point of contact.

We believe that there is no “one size fits all” approach. Our treaty should therefore offer a framework. It should not be too prescriptive about how, when and where this support is provided. To that end, the proposal by the distinguished delegate from Brazil would appear to have merit, as a means to identify the needs of signatories to the convention. We will certainly consider that proposal further.

Any approach which ensures that donor efforts are deconflicted and do not unnecessarily duplicate the work of others must be prioritised. This coordination is primarily a responsibility of donors, and the UK devotes resources to such activity. To that end, we have provided funding to the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise specifically to enable coordination and transparency.
The UK is a firm supporter of capacity building efforts and I will end our contribution on this chapter by returning to our core principles in this area. Capacity building works best when it is demand-led and operates in an inclusive way - drawing on as wide a range of expertise as possible. It is these efforts that will ensure all signatories are well placed to implement this treaty.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

ENDS