



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero



Department for
Business & Trade

Lord Alton
Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0AA

Sarah Jones MP

Minister of State for Industry
Department for Energy Security & Net Zero and
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Dear Lord Alton

Please see below a response to your follow-up questions from my appearance at the Committee:

- What response did the Secretary of State for Energy receive when he addressed the UK's concerns about forced labour in supply chains to Administrator Wang and China's Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang? Did either the Administrator or the Vice Premier provide any assurances?

Chinese counterparts listened carefully to the points the Secretary of State raised. Whilst there remain differences of view, the conversations were cordial and constructive and provided the opportunity for the Secretary of State to raise concerns in line with those set out in UN reports, including the [International Labour Organisation 2025 Committee of Experts Report](#). The UK Government will continue to raise concerns over the use of forced labour in China and around the world, including during the recent UK-China Climate Dialogue.

- How are subjects for investigations by the Debarment Review Service identified? How many investigations have been launched so far?

To raise a referral for consideration for a debarment investigation on the basis of an exclusion ground(s) in Schedules 6 and 7 of the Procurement Act, a referral can be submitted via the appropriate form on the Procurement Review Unit's (PRU) gov.uk landing page, found [here](#). The PRU will also be notified of exclusion decisions taken by contracting authorities which could prompt the Debarment Review Service (DRS) to consider the supplier for debarment. Additionally, the DRS may proactively identify subjects for a proposed debarment investigation via market monitoring.

To date, the DRS has launched 7 debarment investigations using debarment powers in the Procurement Act 2023. Please be advised that Minister Georgia Gould is the responsible minister for public procurement, including debarment. If you should have any future questions relating to debarment, please address them to her.

- For what reason would UK Global Human Rights Sanctions not be considered relevant in a debarment case (and vice versa), given that either restriction could relate to findings of extraterritorial forced labour practices?

It is not possible to advise generally on the relevance of sanctions to a debarment investigation; each case will turn on its particular facts and the sanctions may be a relevant consideration and/or may be determinative, depending on the facts of the case under investigation.

Many thanks for the continued important work of the committee.

Very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large 'S' followed by a stylized 'J' and a long horizontal flourish.

SARAH JONES MP

Minister of State for Industry
Department for Energy Security & Net Zero and
the Department for Business and Trade