

# [BHC Honiara joined unique GlobalMile Marathon to help charities](#)

Staff at the British High Commission in Solomon Islands and Nauru took part in a unique Globalmile marathon to help raise funds for mental health charities around the world.

Held on 15 May 2021, BHC Honiara virtually received the baton at 9am from the British High Commission in Wellington, New Zealand and passed it onto the British High Commission in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

Formally called Diplomile the Globalmile marathon was initiated by Dr Ian Collard, Ambassador-designate to Lebanon, and his wife Tamara, who as part of the Diplomatic Service Families Association, supports British diplomatic families overseas.

Diplomats and other overseas staff working for the UK Government as well their Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office colleagues in the UK and their families, took part to raise funds for mental health charities. The Globalmile challenge was a repeat of the DiploMile challenge first completed last year at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Staff from more than 230 British Embassies, High Commissions, Governors' Offices and Consulates – from Vancouver in the west to Samoa in the east; from Wellington in the south to Reykjavik in the north – took part.

This followed the effort of 158 posts, which took part in the first year of the event.

Saturday's Globalmile starts at 9am on Saturday in Apia, Samoa (9pm Friday night in the UK) and finished at 1 pm in Vancouver, Canada (9pm Saturday UK time).

Two Foreign Office Ministers – the Minister for European Neighbourhood and the Americas Wendy Morton and Minister for Middle East and North Africa James Cleverly also joined the marathon.

Ambassadors to Moscow, Berlin, Brazil, Tel Aviv and Nairobi also took part as well as the Foreign Office's most senior diplomat, Permanent Under Secretary Sir Philip Barton.

Participants at each post ran or walk a mile, before video-conferencing or tweeting with the next mission to pass the virtual baton on – sending it through the 24 time-zones over the course of a day.

In 2020, with global flight restrictions, Dr Ian's previous assignment in Afghanistan meant a 3,500-mile separation from Tamara and their children, which forced them to find creative ways to stay united as a family during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pair knew their situation was not unique in the department then, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, before its merger with the Department for International Development last September.

The Collards decided the marathon would be a good way to unite the department, and its families, and improve mental and physical well-being. It would also allow staff to virtually connect with their colleagues while social distancing measures were in place.

Last year's inaugural event went so well, raising more than £50,000 (SBD\$564,071.80) for charity, it is running again this year.

Meanwhile, Dr Collard said after the success of the global marathon in 2020, demand was high to undertake an even bigger Globalmile in 2021.

He said the Covid-19 outbreak sadly continues and has meant a shift in the way diplomats – like many others – are communicating, engaging and operating, particularly with new technologies. Globalmile makes best use of those ways of engaging.

Last year's event was an incredible boost to all those who took part and we are pleased to be able to raise money again for charity, this year to support mental health initiatives.

Embassies across the world are raising funds for local charities, and Ian and Tamara have set up a Virgin Money Giving for donations to the UK's mental health charity, Mind.

Dr Collard added:

As staff of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, our day job is to serve our country including by safeguarding and promoting our values overseas and being a force for good in the world.

Doing so as a newly merged development and diplomacy department makes our role – and the expansion of Globalmile – even more exciting.