

Queen's birthday celebration 2019 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia: Ambassador's speech

British Ambassador to Mongolia, His Excellency Philip Malone, gave a speech to celebrate the Queen's 93rd birthday, the ever-strengthening UK-Mongolian connections, and possibilities of green growth.



Delivered on: 14 June 2019 (Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered)

Our Guest of Honour, MP Oyundari, Honourable Ministers and MPs, my ambassadorial colleagues and members of the Diplomatic Corps, ladies and gentlemen.

A very warm welcome to you all to the British Residence to join us in celebrating Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday in Ulaanbaatar.

It has been another memorable year for Her Majesty The Queen who celebrated

her 93rd birthday this year. Her Majesty became a great-grandmother for the seventh time with the birth of Archie Harrison Mountbatten-Windsor to TRH The Duke and Duchess of Sussex. Just this week Her Majesty hosted the State Visit by the President of the United States and attended the national event to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings of 1944. And Her Majesty made her very first post on Instagram earlier this year!

Here in Mongolia too, we have enjoyed a further year of strengthening relations between our two countries. We have seen a high number of senior visits in both directions which have underscored the strong relationship between our two countries, have progressed important areas of bilateral cooperation and highlighted the UK's commitment as a Third Neighbour of Mongolia.

We have shared interests in trade and investment, in promoting democracy and a rules based international system and in supporting economic development and diversification in Mongolia.

Our trade and investment relationship continues to thrive. One of the British Government's most important interests in Mongolia is to support Rio Tinto's investment in Oyu Tolgoi, the single largest foreign investment of any kind in Mongolia which represents a significant contribution to Mongolia's prosperity. I am hopeful that the current politically-motivated challenges faced by Oyu Tolgoi will be resolved sensibly and to the benefit of both Mongolia and Oyu Tolgoi.

Our combined trade continues to increase. The UK is Mongolia's second-largest export destination and Mongolia enjoys a healthy surplus with the UK. To help bilateral trade, the British Government offers support through the UK's Export Finance organisation and will introduce a UK equivalent of the EU's GSP+ trade preference scheme when we leave the EU which will enable continued preferential access to the UK market for Mongolian exports.

A further priority for us is to expand the partnership between the London and Mongolian Stock Exchanges to support development of capital markets in Mongolia and initial public offerings of state enterprises.

We have worked together on important issues and shared interests at the United Nations. This week I attended once again the UB Dialogue on NE Asian Security and the UK will send a contingent to next week's Khaan Quest defence exercise. Our respective peacekeepers are enjoying a very strong and collaborative relationship in South Sudan with British peacekeepers providing English lessons for their Mongolian counterparts in exchange for wrestling and martial arts training!

We continue our work to support economic development and diversification for example in education, the cashmere sector and green growth. And it is indeed green growth that is our theme for this year's Queen's Birthday Party.

Taking action to combat climate change and environmental degradation is a top priority for the UK government both at home and around the world. These issues are highly important for Mongolia's economic development too.

You will see around you this evening examples of British activities and innovative technologies showcasing the UK's Green support for Mongolia in areas such as renewable energy, low carbon initiatives, protection of the environment and conservation of Mongolia's iconic wildlife and forest steppe ecosystem. We also have a recycling point to reflect our aim of being a Plastic Free Embassy by the end of this year. I am grateful to Shine Zuun shop, to Raspberry Pie, the National University of Mongolia and the Academy of Sciences and students from the New Mongol College of Technology for enabling these displays tonight. Do check them all out during the evening.

And we continue to make good use of the UK's soft power with our Great Train Journey earlier this year, a video of which you can see on the LED screen and the BBC's documentary about the UK Foreign Office which included a section on the UK/Mongolia relationship featuring the President of Mongolia among others.

One well known example of our soft power has of course been the Steppe Inne pub at the Embassy which has for so many years provided a haven for Mongolians and Brits alike. Sadly, its reign is coming to an end as we will shortly move to new offices in the Shangri-La complex after more than 50 years in our current office. But to celebrate the legacy of the Steppe Inne, we have created a mini-version for you here this evening!

Of course, there are many other things which make up the UK/Mongolia relationship and all of you here this evening play your own particular role and I am grateful to you all for that. Before I finish, I wanted to say a big thank you to our sponsors this evening: Cummins Mongolia, Jaguar Land Rover, Pandrol, Diageo, Chinggis Beer and Ahmad Tea. To our caterers, Namaste Restaurant. And of course to my wonderful Embassy team who continue to excel themselves and have once again done incredible work to make tonight's event such a success. So please enjoy the food, drink, music and company and thank you again for coming.

Published 21 June 2019