

Speech: Ambassador Jeff Glekin's speech at the Queen's Birthday Party

Jeff Glekin, HM Ambassador to Bolivia

Stop acting like a child!

Why is this an insult? It is the innocence of children and lack of respect for the convention that can scream that the emperor has no clothes. The courage of girls like Malala Yousafzai, who can confront the Taliban for the right to education, is an inspiration. Today's children clearly see that my generation has failed them when it comes to protecting our planet, the destruction caused by climate change, and they are acting all over the world to hold adults accountable. Children also have a special ability to teach us. When they play, they have an inherent sense of fairness, and when we look at politics through the eyes of a child, we also know what is right and what is wrong. We need to rediscover this urgently.

Children also offer us a way out, because they do not hold grudges. We must learn from them how to reconcile our differences be friends again. My own daughter Ito teaches me. It was she who told me "Daddy, do not waste water, we must save the planet". And it's my son Enzo, who when he plays football with passion and soul who teaches me that I should never give up and that I should always give myself completely in everything I do. This year I choose children as our theme to celebrate the birthday of Her Majesty the Queen. What better way to do it, when the Royal Family is celebrating the birth of Prince Harry's firstborn.

The United Kingdom has contributed enormously to how we see childhood, from the works of Charles Dickens and Beatrix Potter to the characters that have shaped the childhood of many of us, such as the Paddington Bear, Alice in Wonderland, Peppa Pig and Harry Potter.

We can learn many things from children. For example, they laugh on average about 300 times a day, compared to only 20 adults.

We, as parents, governments and members of society, have the greatest responsibility.

As Kofi Annan said, "There is no more important duty than ensuring that the rights of children are respected, that their well-being is protected, that their lives are free from fear and that they can grow in peace."

And we can do better in this. One billion children around the world live in poverty. Twenty-two thousand children die every day due to poverty. Although poverty damages all human beings, it particularly threatens children. Almost half of the population living in extreme poverty in the world is under 18 years of age. Child poverty is an issue that confronts all societies. That is why we must unite globally to fight against it, and also against the international trafficking and trafficking networks, which target children as

their main victims.

An obligation of adults is to preserve the planet that we are leaving for our young people. There is a lot to do in this space and we all have a role to play. For example, in the Embassy we are supporting the efforts of authorities and civil society to combat the illegal traffic of wildlife, especially the jaguar. A project to protect the Andean bear has received significant funding from the Darwin initiative in the United Kingdom.

Education is also very important for children and adults. We support this by offering young Boliviana professionals the opportunity to study postgraduate courses at British universities, with the Chevening scholarship. We have also facilitated English courses for Foreign Ministry staff, and we have supported a study on the demand for teaching English in Bolivia.

Part of our legacy for children should also be free societies, in which the values of respect for human rights and democracy are preserved. At this point I can not help but refer to the importance of this year in the history of Bolivia. As part of the international community, we can not get involved in a country's elections, but we can support the process to ensure that elections are free and fair. A contribution of ours in that sense has been the support in organizing a workshop aimed at journalists to identify fake news and combat misinformation.

This is something very important and necessary in an electoral environment, and we are pleased that the Bolivia Verifica platform had begun its work in this field.

As all the children present here know, and as the Beatles sang, nothing can be achieved without a little help from our friends. For that reason I want to thank today the friends that have made possible this wonderful celebration of the birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in La Paz. I want to highlight especially Shell Bolivia, Eximbol, DyM with Chivas and also the tourism company Crillón Tours. We greatly appreciate the support that the law firm Aguirre Quintanilla Soria Nishisawa, Insurance Consultants S.A., G4S, Marconsult, Sinchi Wayra and Cambridge College have given us. And I can not fail to thank the Educational Unit of the Colegio Gran Bretaña un El Alto, which has lent us its choir today.

After this act we will make the draw of the raffle and the money raised will be given to the school to help with its infrastructure. Many thanks also to Nidia Doria Medina for lending us the costumes that we are using today.

I also want to thank my embassy team, because I really have the easiest job in the world. I am the head of a wonderful team, and they have achieved this event without much support and with all their passion and energy with which they always apply to every task.

My thanks also to our friends from AESA Ratings, Lazo de la Vega Lawyers, Delizia, Santa Cruz International School, Salar Amazon Tours, La Republica, Prost, Colloky, Urban Rush, Downtown Adventure and Loki Hostel.

Barely four months ago I began in Bolivia as Ambassador of the United Kingdom, and I hope to achieve many things to strengthen relations between our countries, including in the area of business. I would like to see our bilateral trade figures double during my time here.

And regardless of what happens with Brexit, I want to continue working with my colleagues in the European Union and with the entire diplomatic corps.

Today we celebrate Childhood. Given the way we have acted, damaging our planet, failing to face climate change, allowing famine, poverty and conflict, it might be better to say: "stop behaving like an adult". We have so much to celebrate about childhood. We have a lot to learn. So, the next time we think about calling someone's attention for their childish behavior, maybe we should think twice. And for my part, if someone tells me that I am behaving like a child, I will take it as a compliment.

I invite you to toast with me for Bolivia, for the United Kingdom, and for children all over the world.