

British Embassy commemorates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Dear friends,

Good evening and welcome to the Queen's Birthday Party and Platinum Jubilee Celebration!

The last time I stood at a podium to deliver a Queen's Birthday speech was in March 2020. It feels a long time ago. And as I stand here today it shocks me how much the world has changed in two years.

In March 2020 Covid-19 officially arrived in Guatemala. The reality of a global health crisis was beginning to be felt. But I doubt that many of us understood then the impact Covid-19 would have. People across the world have suffered directly or indirectly. They have lost loved ones. They have suffered economic challenges. And we continue to live with uncertainty.

I also doubt that two years ago anybody would have believed that a European country, Russia, could invade without provocation a neighbour, Ukraine. But today we witness via news channels the flattening of Ukraine's cities through the indiscriminate use of artillery and missile strikes with massive loss of life. These are horrors from the past that I never expected to see in the 21st century.

Despite the challenges we have faced, the global response to Covid and the near universal repudiation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine demonstrate the resilience and importance of international organisations such as the UN and NATO. In this context, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Guatemala for its strong support. Guatemala's votes at the UN have helped send a clear message to President Putin that his invasion will not be allowed to succeed.

Another area of international co-operation that we should celebrate is COP26 and the concrete outcomes it achieved. Of course, there is still much to do if we are going to tackle climate change. But COP26 demonstrated the art of the possible and sets the stage for future work to overcome this existential risk to our world. I would like to express my thanks to Minister Rojas and Rita Mishaan for their important work at COP26 that contributed to its success.

This evening, however, is of course focused on one celebration in particular, And that is the Queen's Birthday and her Platinum Jubilee which marks her 70 years on the throne. I spoke a moment ago my shock at how much has changed during my two years as Ambassador. This change pales into insignificance when one thinks about the changes the Queen has witnessed since she assumed her role in 1952.

In 1952, there was, of course, no twitter, no internet, there were no

personal computers or mobile telephones. It took several hours for the Queen to hear of the death of her father because she was travelling in Kenya. Something unimaginable today.

In 1952, Joseph Stalin still ruled the USSR. Chairman Mao ruled China. And petrol cost 27 US cents per gallon.

Here in Guatemala Jacobo Arbenz was President, Nobel prize winner, Miguel Angel Asturias, was a diplomat in Paris and Guatemala participated for the first time in the Olympic Games in Helsinki with 21 athletes. The population of Guatemala was just three million people.

In the UK Winston Churchill was Prime Minister and a thick smog in London in December killed 4,000 people. The UK was still recovering from the impact of the Second World War.

Since 1952 the Queen has worked with 14 Prime Ministers, made 150 overseas visits and carried out more than 21,000 royal engagements. She has sat for more than 200 official portraits, and she is the longest reigning monarch the UK has ever had.

She is the only person in the UK to be allowed to drive without a licence. She doesn't have a passport – despite her extensive travel. And she has two birthdays – today we mark the official birthday that happens in June.

But the fact that stands out for me about the Queen is her outstanding sense of duty and empathy to those who are in suffering around the world. She has been an important figurehead for the UK during times of enormous social change, including the difficult times we are facing today. She has stood for important values.

I take inspiration from this as I look forward to working, with my team, in Guatemala and Honduras during the coming year.

We will continue to build our economic relationship through the UK-Central America Association Agreement. I very much hope that despite global challenges we can boost bilateral trade and explore investment opportunities. These are important pre-conditions to reducing poverty.

At the same time we will continue to champion the importance of rule of law, fostering transparency, protecting human rights and tackling corruption. These values are prerequisites for solid democratic structures and creating a business environment that can attract investment. As part of this work the UK last year sanctioned a Guatemalan Congressman for corruption. The UK Government also made statements linked to other rule of law-related issues. In line with the norms of diplomacy around the world, my team and I will continue to promote these values – and we value the important dialogue we have with the Guatemalan government.

Our climate change work and efforts to support biodiversity here will ramp up this year following the launch of the Biodiverse Landscapes Fund. About US\$25 million will be invested over the coming seven years in Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador and Honduras to achieve these objectives and help with the

sustainable development of communities living in these areas.

None of this will happen of course without the support of everyone here today. The Guatemalan Government, private sector, civil society, the press, British nationals – all of you are essential partners. So let me take this opportunity to thank you all for your support during the past two years – and I very much look forward to working with you all during the year ahead (hopefully without masks!).

I would also like to thank the Embassy team who have demonstrated enormous energy, creativity and commitment during difficult times. I feel very fortunate and humbled to lead such a great team.

And of course I thank my wife, Yuehping, who always says the words I need to hear, and listens to words she's probably had to listen to at least two times before. I couldn't do my job without her.

So to finish, thank you all for coming. Enjoy the evening, which is designed to be a party – not a formal reception. Hot food is now served. And, I hope, dance to the music of the Rubber Souls who have a programme of British music lined up.

Cheers.

[Major road and bridge upgrades to boost economic growth across the country](#)

- government invests over £160 million to level up infrastructure and support local communities
- four projects across England to reduce congestion and generate £659.3 million in economic benefits
- schemes expected to create thousands more jobs and support development of thousands of new homes

Motorists, pedestrians and cyclists will benefit from reduced congestion and improved connectivity through £160.8 million investment for 4 major road projects across England.

Today (3 June 2022) the government has announced 4 schemes in Newcastle, Cornwall, Greater Manchester and Southampton, which will generate an estimated £659.3 million in economic benefits for the regions through improved investment, new housing and employment opportunities.

The road and bridge schemes will level up infrastructure across the country,

helping local economies thrive through bolstered employment opportunities, new housing developments and improving connectivity to incentivise business investment.

The 4 major road schemes announced today, backed by a total of £160.8 million investment, include:

- £78.5 million for a new 3.85 mile (6.2 kilometre) road linking St Austell to the A30 – the main transport artery in Cornwall, creating 6,300 new local jobs – the scheme will generate almost £112 million in wider economic benefits through reduced journey times, increased investment in the local area and better opportunities for clean travel thanks to a new shared pedestrian and cycle facility running alongside the whole length of the new road
- £35.3 million for essential maintenance to the Tyne Bridge and adjacent Central Motorway, including improvements to traffic management and cycle route facilities – the repairs will generate £130.5 million in economic benefits by improving local connectivity, tackling congestion and poor air quality as they will avoid the rerouting of HGVs through residential areas
- £33.6 million to enhance walking and cycling accessibility and tackle congestion across the A34 between Greater Manchester and Stockport – with estimated economic benefits of £76.8 million, the scheme will support the development of more than 2,500 new homes and 33.3 hectares of employment space, while boosting transport links to Manchester Airport and HS2
- £13.4 million for essential maintenance to the A35 Redbridge Causeway – a vital link between New Forest, Southampton and its port – the scheme is estimated to be very high value for money and will generate almost £340 million worth of direct economic benefits through better connectivity, improved employment and housing opportunities and the expansion of the Port of Southampton

Roads Minister Baroness Vere said:

We are committed to delivering world-class infrastructure across all parts of the country which supports local economies to thrive.

This £160.8 million investment will level up those opportunities from the North East to the South West, while giving motorists, cyclists and pedestrians the modern, safe and uncongested roads they deserve.

These schemes also present yet another important stepping stone

towards cutting emissions and building a clean, efficient road network that is truly accessible to all.

These schemes will also boost green travel opportunities through upgraded lanes and paths for cyclists and pedestrians to support low-emission, active travel, working towards the country's net zero goals.

The investment follows a string of government measures to encourage active travel and help level up the country by improving road infrastructure.

These include [£200 million to encourage cycling and walking](#), more than [£5 billion over 2020 to 2025 for highways maintenance](#) and the introduction of a [new inspection regime](#) to tackle the plague of potholes.

Martin McTague, National Chair of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), said:

Investment in local infrastructure projects is vital to improving connectivity across the country, reducing congestion and upgrading the roads that small businesses use on a day to day basis.

Small firms and sole traders rely heavily on road networks to be accessible, efficient and safe. They are also looking to reduce environmental impact and improve the air quality in their local community – and so embrace green travel options when they are available.

Our economic recovery relies on a solid transport system and this latest investment is a positive step in the right direction.

[Crowning glory: Crown symbol pint glasses making a comeback as nation celebrates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee](#)

- Businesses helped to display the Crown symbol on pint glasses
- Consultation launched on scrapping the EU ban on imperial measurements, benefitting businesses with greater choice when serving shoppers

- Plans will restore “common sense” to the statute book and ditch overbearing EU rules

Post-Brexit plans to return the Crown symbol to pint glasses and to remove the EU ban on imperial measures have been set out today (Friday 3 June).

In a tribute to Her Majesty The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, new government guidance published today will help businesses apply the Crown symbol to pint glasses.

As long ago as 1698, British pint glasses intended for measuring and serving beer were marked with a crown stamp as a declaration that the glass, when filled to the brim or to a line measure, accurately measured a pint of beer. The Crown stamp gave customers confidence that they were not being sold a short measure of beer. But the symbol was replaced by the EU-wide ‘CE’ marking’ in 2006 in order to conform with EU rules in the UK.

Alongside the Crown symbol guidance, a consultation has been published today on how to implement a change to the law on weights and measures, so that shoppers and business have greater choice over the way they buy and sell products.

The consultation will help the government consider, for example, allowing vegetables to be sold in pounds only, or in pounds with a less prominent metric equivalent, should businesses wish to do so. This will help inform the Government’s plans to legislate to give businesses greater choice in the units they use. There is no intention to require businesses to change their existing practices and so this will not place greater costs on businesses.

Today’s announcement is not just about pounds and ounces, but about where the UK’s laws are made. The ‘metric martyrs’ was a totemic case in establishing the supremacy of EU law. Now we have left the EU, the UK can take decisions in the best interests of British businesses and consumers.

Business Minister Paul Scully said:

This Platinum Jubilee weekend we’re raising a toast to Her Majesty The Queen’s health and service to this country. It’s a fitting tribute that we’re now helping businesses to restore the Crown symbol to pint glasses.

While we think of our fruit and veg by the pound, the legacy of EU rules means we legally have to sell them by the kilo. Our consultation today will help shops to serve customers in the way their customers want.

UK law currently requires metric units to be used, as the primary indication, for all trade purposes with only limited exceptions, reflecting rules from our time in the EU. Currently, imperial units are only authorised for use on

their own in a small number of cases such sales of draught beer and cider. Now we have left the EU, the UK can act in the best interests of its businesses and consumers.

- UK law currently requires metric units to be used for all trade purposes with only limited exceptions. Our legal framework reflects the requirements placed upon the UK as part of its membership of the EU by the requirements set out in EU Directive 80/181/EC (as amended) which concerns units of measurement.
- The Government announced its intention to review the ban on the use of imperial units for sales and marking on 16 September 2021, as part of a wider announcement of a range of regulatory reforms taking advantage of Brexit. It also follows on from a recommendation made by the independent Taskforce on Innovation, Growth and Regulatory Reform. The Taskforce's Report to Government published on 16 June 2021, recommended that the Government should amend the Weights and Measures Act 1985 to allow traders to use imperial measures without metric equivalents.
- The measurements consultation will run for 12 weeks, and a range of stakeholders are being invited to contribute, including businesses, trade associations, enforcement bodies and consumer organisations.
- For centuries, British pint glasses intended for measuring and serving beer were marked with a crown stamp as a declaration that the glass accurately measured a pint. In 2006 the crown stamp was replaced by the CE mark, which was a new conformity marking required by EU legislation, and the crown stamp was no longer required as a conformity marking for pint glasses in the UK. The crown symbol is fondly remembered by many people as a symbol that they associate with traditional pint measures. In recognition of the heritage of the crown stamp, the Government is providing this guidance on how manufacturers can apply a crown symbol to beer glasses as a decorative mark on a voluntary basis. Pint glasses used to measure and sell drinks will still be required to continue to display the legally required conformity markings to show they are accurate, in addition to any voluntary decorative markings.
- In England, Scotland, and Wales capacity serving measures, such as the pint, are required to carry the UKCA marking to indicate conformity with the legal requirements, along with the M marking. CE-marked pint glasses will continue to be accepted on the GB market until 1 January 2023. In Northern Ireland they must carry the CE mark (or CE + UKNI mark if conformity assessment was carried out by a UK approved body), along with the M marking. The crown symbol can be added as an additional decorative image. It is for businesses to decide whether to apply the crown symbol.

Mediation to help thousands more families avoid costly legal battles

- thousands more people to receive mediation vouchers for family disputes
- more than 8,400 vouchers already used – 10,200 more now funded
- 65 percent of cases reach whole or partial agreements away from court

An extra £5.4 million in funding will help even more families to resolve disputes away from court, such as contact arrangements for children.

Under the scheme, £500 mediation vouchers are provided to divorcing couples with the aim of helping them find mutually agreeable solutions and freeing up space in the family courts. It seeks to spare parents and their children the anxiety and cost of often lengthy and acrimonious courtroom disputes.

The scheme has been a success with around two-thirds of cases reaching full or partial agreements away from court.

The money announced today (3 June 2022) more than doubles the investment into the initiative since its launch in March last year which now totals £8.7 million.

It will provide around 10,200 additional vouchers for mediation services – adding to the 8,400 which have been issued so far.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab said:

We are investing over £5 million this year alone to help more families to resolve their disputes without the stress and trauma of lengthy courtroom battles.

Mediation protects children, by removing the bitterness of parental disputes from the amplifying effect of a courtroom – and allows the family courts to focus on adjudicating cases with serious safeguarding concerns, including domestic abuse.

Mediation is often a quicker and cheaper way of resolving disputes. It involves couples working through their differences – led by a trained and accredited mediator – to reach agreements they are both prepared to accept, such as how to split assets or arrange child contact times, rather than have a judge decide for them. The specialist mediator helps participants to reach solutions tailored to their circumstances with many coming to agreements within 2 sessions.

Preliminary research from the Family Mediation Council (FMC), who run the scheme, show promising results. Survey data of the first 2,800 completed cases using the vouchers revealed 65 percent reached either a whole or partial agreement away from court, while a further 3 percent only attended court to formalise their agreement. It also showed 50 percent of participants would not have attempted mediation without the financial incentive offered by the scheme.

Without the vouchers, mediation sessions would normally be charged for unless one of the parties has access to legal aid.

If a case is eligible for vouchers, the mediator will automatically claim back the contributions from the FMC. The investment announced today will extend the initiative to March 2023.

Notes to editors

- In total, an extra £5.38 million is being invested in the scheme, bringing total funding to just under £8.68 million since March 2021.
- The scheme is administered by the Family Mediation Council, on behalf of the Ministry of Justice.
- Further information about the scheme and how it works is provided to parties at their Mediation Information and Assessment Meeting (MIAM), which all those involved in family cases are required to attend, unless they have a valid exemption.
- Mediation can be undertaken by other family members, not just separating parents.
- In June, 2020, [we announced a major overhaul of the family courts](#) to protect domestic abuse victims which included more special protections in courts, stronger powers for judges, and piloting Integrated Domestic Abuse Courts.
- In June, 2020, the [Divorce Act received Royal Assent](#), which will remove the needless 'blame game' that can harm children while ensuring couples have the time to reflect, plan for the future, or if necessary to turn back. This came into [force on 6 April, 2022](#).
- We're investing record amounts across our courts and tribunals, with £324 million over the next three years to improve timeliness in civil and family courts and tribunals. Another £200 million will complete our £1.3 billion court reform programme, modernising the justice system to make it quicker and more efficient.

What is family mediation?

- Family mediation is a process in which an independent, professionally trained mediator helps parties work out arrangements for children and finances where there is a dispute.
- The mediator is not there to tell each side what to do, but can help them reach an agreement while trying to improve communication between them. They aren't there to try and keep couples together but help them find a practical way forward after a relationship has broken down.
- Mediation allows the parties to stay in control, as no one will be forced to do or agree to anything against their wishes. Unlike in a

courtroom both partners can agree to a solution rather than have a judge decide for them.

- The mediator will work with the parties, either together or separately, to help them find a solution which works for them both.
- Mediation can be less stressful than going to court, especially for children who are involved in proceedings. It is also cheaper than going through the court process, and it is also confidential unlike proceedings in the family court.
- Prior to the voucher scheme, funded mediation was only available for those who meet the financial requirements through the Legal Aid scheme.
- Agreements made in mediation can be made legally binding by a court if necessary and the legal support to do this can be offered.

Strengthening accountability and justice for serious violations of international law

Thank you Mr President,

Let me pay tribute to Albania for choosing this important subject for the first day of your historic first Security Council Presidency.

We are also grateful to President Donoghue, High Commissioner Bachelet and Professor Akande for their presentations today. On behalf of the United Kingdom, I would also like to extend our condolences to Brazil on the passing of Judge Trindade, whose life was dedicated to the topic of today's debate.

Mr President, today, those violating international law clearly do not fear accountability or justice.

That needs to change.

Because the way we approach accountability reflects the state of our world. After World War 2 we understood this and established the International Court of Justice. If we want a multilateralism that works, we need rules that are respected.

Russia's unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine is a flagrant violation of the most fundamental rules of international law and, as the Secretary-General said, an attack on the UN Charter.

Russia and all those that violate international law must be held accountable.

I would like to stress two points around how we can address this:

First, the importance of using the full breadth of fora and instruments

available to us.

While this Council has been blocked from taking action in relation to Ukraine, this has not prevented the international system from taking steps to pursue justice. As we've heard today and as we heard in the Arria meeting convened by Albania and France in April, the International Court of Justice, the Human Rights Council, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights are all engaged according to their mandates. The United Kingdom played a leading role in convening a record number of States in the referral of the situation to the ICC.

The breadth of the response is striking and demonstrates – like the huge majority votes in the General Assembly – that the world will not let these violations go unanswered.

Moreover, while Russia has shown contempt for the ICJ and international law by doing nothing to comply with the Court's legally binding Order, many other States comply with the international obligations and this is a source of hope.

Second, the importance of evidence collection that meets the appropriate standard.

Once we have the evidence, prosecutions are ready to strike at the right time. For example, evidence collected and preserved by the IIIM and UNITAD is helping to bring some of those responsible for the most heinous crimes in Syria and Iraq to justice. In Ukraine, we have seen a massive, coordinated effort to ensure the evidence is available for future cases.

Of course, to collect evidence on the ground, it is necessary to have access. It is therefore a matter of deep regret that the Chinese authorities did not provide the full, unfettered access to Xinjiang for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights that we and our international partners have long called for.

Today's debate has demonstrated that there are diverse ways of pursuing those who commit serious violations of international law. Perpetrators cannot rest on their ability to block progress in the Security Council or elsewhere. Accountability and justice will find a way. This is the principle on which the multilateral system rests, and we must step up to defend it.