

Remarks by HE Governor Nigel Dakin CMG during an event to celebrate the Commonwealth Games Baton being in TCI

Good afternoon Turks and Caicos,

I was asked to say something – by the organizing committee – about ‘Youth, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion’. It’s a set of subjects that don’t lend themselves to brevity and I suspect brevity is what is needed today. The Baton Relay is not about ‘talking’, it’s about ‘doing’, and it’s not about ‘sitting and listening’ but about ‘moving and engaging’. So I’m going to let the Baton do the talking – or at least use the Baton in part as an analogy – to touch on some of those issues, albeit briefly.

First, the Baton is a reminder that, while we live our daily lives in a small Island chain, we are very much connected to the wider world. Except for the United Nations, if one were looking for an international organization that expressed diversity, more than any other, it would indeed be the Commonwealth. And within the Commonwealth the flagship must be ‘the Games’ that bring together, into one place, so much diversity yet united in friendly competition as the youth of the commonwealth compete against each other on only one measure – the measure of excellence.

By the end of its journey this baton – moving through the Commonwealth – will have travelled 90,000 miles and it will have visited all 72 Commonwealth nations and territories. Over 269 days, tens of thousands of remarkable people, everyone different, everyone with their own hopes and dreams, everyone with their own loves and likes, will have engaged in a shared endeavor. That now includes many here in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Put together this global village represents more ethnicities, cultures and languages than we can – here today – easily name or imagine.

Despite the games natural focus on ‘youth’, here in the TCI family is, and remains, the most special of relationships and it was good to celebrate this when five generations of one family – including a Centenarian – passed the Baton between them on Wednesday. Close relationships, across the generations, as well as close relationships, across the globe, are a feature of these islands and something worthy of celebration.

The Baton spent Christmas Eve in the Seychelles, saw the New Year’s sun rise in the Maldives and will be in Jamaica over the Easter weekend. Starting its journey on 7 October 2021 it went from Buckingham Palace to Cyprus, Cyprus to Malta and then through nineteen countries in Africa, as but examples: Nigeria, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, the list goes on....

Before it got to us it had already been to Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India. It’s travelled across Southeast Asia, visiting Singapore, Malaysia

and Brunei. February saw it in the Pacific Islands including Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Samoa. Just a few weeks ago it was in New Zealand and in mid-March it was in Australia.

And now it is with us, here in the Caribbean. We in the Turks and Caicos Islands received it from the Bahamas and we will send it onward to Cayman – but for a few days it's been with us – and we have shown it the full beauty of these Islands, as it traveled through them in the hands of our amazing people. In holding that Baton, our people are in one sense immediately connected to every land, and every person, I've just mentioned.

After it has left the Caribbean, it still has many miles to travel. It goes through Canada and there will then be stops in the Falkland Islands and the Channel Islands and thence through the four nations that make up the United Kingdom where the final bearer will hand the baton back to her Majesty at the opening ceremony on the 28th July. The message, hidden in a chamber under the Birmingham 2022 Coat of Arms will then be read out in what, as it happens, is my home city – Birmingham – where I was last week opening a twinning relationship with their Police Force and our Police Force.

In this remarkable journey the Baton will have passed through a Commonwealth that has a combined population of 2 billion people. Of these, more than 60% are under 30 years of age. The Commonwealth may well be the largest youth organization in the world!

This global journey ends in one – if not the – most diverse cities in the UK. As a child my family were not sufficiently well-off for us to have holiday's overseas – we did 'staycations' long before that word was ever coined. But culturally it was possible to travel the globe without travelling far from my childhood front door. It isn't a coincidence that my professional life was spent living in cultures that I'd got to know in Birmingham – be they Indian, Pakistani, West African or Caribbean.

In this regard (and probably only in this regard) our young people in TCI are now growing up in an environment similar to the one I grew up in; the world is now represented in TCI and diversity is a feature of our landscape. The challenge is not about diversity, the challenge is about inclusion.

Living amongst diversity is what 'happens to you'. Choosing to be inclusive is an intentional choice. And choosing to be inclusive is not straightforward – we all have a subliminal inbuilt prejudice for those we know, and who seem similar to us.

But there's a very straightforward route to being inclusive and in that, sport has much to teach us. The fastest route to inclusion is to give a group a challenging goal, to achieve something that is well beyond the capability of any one person. Then inclusion doesn't become something that's optional – it becomes the only route to success. When you've agreed on the need to 'win' you quickly realize that the things that you once saw as the things that differentiated you, are now the things that strengthen you.

The Commonwealth games are a competitive sport, many involving individual

excellence, but that individual excellence would be nothing without the coaching staff or the organizational support. Even the finest individual athlete is not an island. Life (by which I mean all forms of life over the history of our planet) is a competitive challenge, fought against the odds against an often hostile or unpredictable environment, but what becomes clear over time is that those who consistently achieve aren't necessarily the best individual, they are the individual who is regularly the best team player.

Indeed that would be my advice to any young person listening; if you are the best team player you can be – over a full career you will find you will be sought after in whatever walk of life you choose. In its rawest sense, inclusion leads to survival, and in its best sense, inclusion leads to delivering way beyond your own capability.

So to conclude: here we have the Baton manufactured in a city that describes itself as having a thousand trades, and that is now one of the most multi-cultural places in the UK. It will have travelled the equivalent of twice around the world, touching countries that account for a quarter of humanity and including cultures, languages and histories that no one person could hope to understand.

It's travelled through the archipelago of the TCI and captured, through its sensors, the most beautiful place on earth. Before we have even won our first medal we are confident we have already won that accolade.

We thank all those who make our involvement in the Games possible, we stand behind, and in awe, of our amazing athletes knowing that in doing their best, they are the best they can be, and we pray for a Games where we are not only successful – as we will surely be – but one that is also an affirmation that we are part of a global village, that there is more that unites humanity than divides, and if there isn't – then we have a responsibility to make it so.

And with that, may God now bless our athletes, proud to drape themselves in our flag, may God bless our people, proud to carry the Baton through these lands and may God continue to Bless these beautiful by nature Turks and Caicos Islands.

HE the Governor welcoming the baton to TCI

The Hon Premier shares the privilege of walking the baton with a young participant

Enhanced regional efforts to pursue

peace in DRC

Thank you, President. Let me begin by offering a warm welcome to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Lutundula of the DRC, as well as the Representatives of Rwanda and Uganda. Let me also thank ASG Pobee and Special Envoy Xia for their briefings.

I will focus my intervention on the security and humanitarian situations in Eastern DRC and ongoing regional efforts to pursue peace.

The United Kingdom remains deeply concerned by the fragile security situation in Eastern DRC. The latest renewal of violence threatens recent efforts to pursue peace. In particular, we note the deep, and understandable, anger of countries in the region in relation to alleged cross-border attacks.

The United Kingdom recalls the impact that decades of violence in the Great Lakes has had on the lives, and futures, of the people of the DRC and the wider region. This Council cannot become hardened to the displacement of over 5 million people, as well as serious and sustained violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The United Kingdom welcomes recent enhanced diplomatic outreach and dialogue between countries in the region. The region's leaders, convened by President Kenyatta, have shown the statesmanship their people deserve. We also welcome engagement by the African Union and regional mechanisms.

It is clear that there are many actors in the DRC and wider region who would be happy to see this regional determination to deliver peace fail. In this context, we call on the leaders of the region to redouble their efforts to pursue dialogue, de-escalation and the use of effective regional mechanisms to resolve disputes.

We also reiterate our call on all armed groups operating in Eastern DRC to immediately cease violence and participate unconditionally in the ongoing political process in Nairobi.

President, high levels of violence and insecurity, perpetuated in particular by the Allied Democratic Forces, CODECO and M23 armed groups are hampering humanitarian access and risking the lives of a highly vulnerable population. Similarly, the continued kidnappings of humanitarian staff in the Sake-Masisi area mean vital assistance is not reaching those in greatest need. We urge the Government to take concrete action against criminality in the area and ensure the protection of humanitarian workers.

We are also concerned by the risk posed to civilians by intercommunal violence, particularly in IDP camps in Ituri province. A sustainable plan for their protection is desperately needed. In this regard, it is vital that there is strong coordination and a supportive relationship with MONUSCO in order to sustain security and the protection of civilians. This will be particularly important as MONUSCO prepares to withdraw from Tanganyika

province and focus its efforts on the conflict-affected provinces of North and South Kivu and Ituri.

President, we see this as a moment of both hope and risk for DRC and the wider region. The United Kingdom stands with those who seek a more peaceful future for the people of DRC and its region.

Thank you.

Bradford crowned UK City of Culture 2025

- Bradford wins title following a record 20 initial bids
- For the first time runners up will receive £125,000 to take forward elements of their bid

Bradford has been crowned UK City of Culture 2025, taking on the prestigious title from Coventry UK City of Culture 2021.

The winner was approved by Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries based on independent advice from a panel of experts led by TV writer-producer Sir Phil Redmond. The experts visited each of the four shortlisted places, which also included County Durham, Southampton and Wrexham County Borough, to learn more about the bids before making their final recommendation.

Bradford will now receive £275,000 in initial seed funding to make sure the city can hit the ground running and get the wheels in motion early as it develops its plans for 2025. This grant will help pave the way for a year of unforgettable cultural activities and events.

For the first time in the history of the UK City of Culture competition, each of the runners up will also receive a grant of £125,000 to support the bidding team in taking forward some of the most exciting elements of the bid.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

Congratulations to Bradford, which is a worthy winner of UK City of Culture 2025.

Art and culture should be accessible to everyone and this prestigious title will help Bradford deliver unforgettable events for communities on their doorstep.

There was stiff competition and I thank County Durham, Southampton and Wrexham County Borough for their excellent bids.

Coventry has shown us how powerful the UK City of Culture title is at boosting investment, attracting visitors and leaving a lasting legacy for local people.

Bradford is a young and vibrant city with a rich heritage and its impressive bid drew upon its wide-range of local cultural assets including the Bronte Parsonage, Saltaire UNESCO World Heritage Site and the National Science and Media Museum.

The city is also investing in its future cultural assets having successfully secured £20 million from the Levelling Up fund to invest in the Squire Lane Wellbeing and Enterprise Centre, and is using another £4 million DCMS grant to redevelop the Bradford Odeon into a 4,000 seat live music and entertainment venue: 'Bradford Live'.

The judges were impressed by the ambition of Bradford's bid which, at its centre, celebrates the place where people live, the power of diversity and aims to create new opportunities for everyone. The bid encouraged strong local engagement with artists and residents, focused on creating a sense of local pride.

Sir Phil Redmond, Chair of the Independent Advisory Panel, said:

The selection is never about whether one bid is better than another, it is more that one bid has the potential to make a bigger and deliverable impact. For 2021 we asked Coventry to raise the bar previously set by Derry-Londonderry 2013 and then raised by Hull 2017. Challenged by the pandemic, Coventry have certainly done that and I am looking forward to seeing how far the cultural bar can be raised in BD25.

Winning the title can have a hugely positive impact on the place – attracting millions of pounds of investment, bringing in thousands of visitors and engaging the local community.

Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 used the title to transform the city through a spectacular year-long cultural programme, engaging an audience of over one million through more than 700 ticketed, unticketed and online events.

Martin Sutherland, Chief Executive, Coventry City of Culture Trust said:

Congratulations to Bradford on winning the UK City of Culture title for 2025. Everyone in Coventry wishes you the best of luck for your own fantastic and impactful year. This will be a truly remarkable time for your city and we look forward to supporting you as you prepare to celebrate all that is special about Bradford in 2025.

Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 has shown that the title has the power to

engage people from across the whole community, including by training 1,515 City Hosts who contributed almost 36,000 volunteering hours. The title also helped attract £172 million in inward investment.

Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:

We are delighted that Bradford has been given the prestigious title of City of Culture 2025. We are looking forward to working with Bradford to make their programme an amazing success and to help share its fascinating heritage on a worldwide stage.

Thanks to National Lottery players, we've been able to fund large-scale projects at past City of Culture award holders, Hull and Coventry. We have witnessed first-hand the transformational effects that this title can bring, creating a deeper sense of place, pride and identity. We look forward to the exciting opportunities it will bring to the people of Bradford now and into the future. Congratulations Bradford!

As part of its status as UK City of Culture 2025, Bradford will be eligible for a £3 million grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and now has three years to prepare for a year of groundbreaking cultural activities.

Additional quotes

Lord Mendoza, the Commissioner for Cultural Recovery & Renewal, said:

I am confident that Bradford will prove an outstanding City of Culture. I am fortunate enough to have visited Bradford over the last two years. The city's political, business and cultural leaders have a passionate commitment to creative innovation. Together they demonstrate that culture has the power to increase a place's vibrancy and civic pride. Coventry's success has shown that culture also has the power to drive major inward investment.

Darren Henley, Chief Executive, Arts Council England, said:

Being named UK City of Culture is awe-inspiring and life-enhancing, creating happier lives for residents and visitors alike.

Creativity is all about telling stories and this title unlocks a whole new narrative for a city. We saw it in Hull, we've seen it again in Coventry. As Bradford takes over, I'm excited to see how this great city will soar to new creative heights between now and the end of 2025 thanks to the work of brilliant artists, performers, creators and curators.

Skinder Hundal, Director Arts, British Council, said:

A massive Congratulations to Bradford for being selected as the next City of Culture 2025. This year-long celebration will showcase Bradford's unique qualities and open its cultural life to the rest of the world, the UK and local communities. The British Council look forward to supporting Bradford's international ambitions and seeing the city's culture, creativity and artistic excellence put firmly on the map.

Ruth Hollis, Chief Executive, Spirit of 2012 said:

Spirit of 2012 is proud to have supported the UK City of Culture Programme for many years, investing in Hull 2017 and Coventry 2021. It's not an exaggeration to say that major events like this have the power to transform people and places, building community pride, inspiring volunteering and creating opportunities for everyone to take part. And, it's not just Bradford who wins today. We're looking forward to working with some of the long and shortlisted places to ensure that their bid is a spark for volunteering programmes that build empathy, pride and connection, the key ingredients for the wellbeing of people and their places.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Full list of initial bids:

- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon
- The City of Bangor and North West Wales
- The Borderlands region, comprising Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Border, Northumberland, Cumbria and Carlisle City
- Bradford
- Conwy County
- Cornwall
- Derby
- County Durham
- Lancashire
- Medway
- City of Newport
- Powys
- Southampton
- Stirling
- The Tay Cities region
- Torbay and Exeter
- Wakefield District
- City of Wolverhampton

- Wrexham Borough Council
 - Great Yarmouth and East Suffolk
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British Ambassador meets new Guatemalan Minister of Economy

British Ambassador to Guatemala, Nick Whittingham, met with Janio Rosales, Minister of Economy, to discuss the country's plans under the strategy "Guatemala doesn't stop" which aims to improve the business environment, and attract more investments, especially in the infrastructure sector.

Ambassador Whittingham explained that the UK wants to foster honest, reliable investment, through trade and mechanisms like the support of UK Export Finance (UKEF) in the region, building on the UK's financial expertise and the strengths of the City of London and delivering the Prime Minister's vision for the Clean Green Initiative – supporting countries to grow their economies sustainably.

Ambassador Whittingham and Minister Rosales addressed the implementation of the Association Agreement between Central America and the United Kingdom, which has been conducted without problems since it came into force. In 2022, the agreement will host special committees to continue building on its benefits, in order to increase trade flows between Guatemala and the United Kingdom.

The Ambassador also stressed the importance of working together with Guatemala in multilateral forums, such as the World Trade Organization, in order to agree on a positive and forward-looking agenda that promotes inclusive and sustainable free and fair trade. He urged Guatemala to join the international community in pressing Russia economically to end the war in Ukraine, which is generating increased costs for food and fuels around the world.

The Vice Minister of Integration and Foreign Trade, María Luisa Flores; the Vice Minister of Investment and Competition, Francisca Cárdenas; and the Vice Minister of Registry Affairs, Juan Carlos Pellecer, also participated in the meeting.

In 2021, bilateral trade between Guatemala and the UK was US\$225 million; Guatemalan exports to the UK market were US\$140 million, while British exports to the Guatemalan market were US\$84 million. The main Guatemalan products exported were vegetables, fruits, coffee, beverages and sugar, while the main British products were cars, beverages, chemicals, and specialized machinery.

Minister promotes ties between Scotland, Denmark and the Faroes

Scottish exports to both countries are worth more than £695 million a year alone.

In total, the UK and Denmark have a £12 billion trading relationship (imports and exports) and the figure is £881 million for the UK and Faroes.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart undertook a packed programme in Copenhagen and Tórshavn, including:

- meeting key industry representatives and leading political figures to bolster our ties across trade, investment, green energy, telecoms aquaculture, space, research, security and the West's joint Russia/Ukraine response
- getting a progress report from one of the world's biggest energy companies on its investment into Scotland and the rest of the UK
- visiting the Faroese company that owns one of Scotland's largest fish farm firms to hear about their investment plans
- learning about connectivity in the Faroes archipelago (fixed link and technological)
- visiting a Faroese military cemetery to lay a wreath on a Commonwealth War Grave.

The Minister also discussed sanctions against Russia and the issue of Russian vessels in Faroese-UK shared fishing waters.

Minister Stewart said:

Scotland plays a vital role within the United Kingdom and it was an honour to promote our interests in Denmark and the Faroe Islands to encourage greater trade links to directly benefit Scottish communities.

We greatly value the strong and important ties between the UK and our European friends, neighbours and fellow NATO members. There are enduring cultural, business and trade links between Scotland and

Nordic countries.

While in Copenhagen, the Minister met with Her Majesty's Ambassador to Denmark, Emma Hopkins, and Carsten Grønbech-Jensen, Denmark's State Secretary for European Affairs and the Arctic. He also went to the Danish Parliament to meet MPs from the Foreign Affairs Committee.

There was also a visit to Avedøre power station, whose owner – Ørsted (Denmark's largest power company) – has invested in the Salamander floating offshore wind project off the east coast of Scotland.

In the Faroes he met with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs director Gunnar Holm-Rasmussen and Minister Magnus Rasmussen from the Ministry of Trade. Discussions included shared opportunities from the fisheries sector and access to the jointly managed Faroes/UK Special Area in the North Atlantic.

He visited Bakkafrøst (the firm which owns the Scottish Salmon Company) to talk about their plans for investment in Scotland and met executives from Føroya Tele, a public telecoms company, about rural connectivity and planned investments in Orkney and Shetland.

The Minister will also meet the company that runs the archipelago's network of road tunnels to see whether it could be feasible to implement similar links between the Scottish Islands. As part of the visit he saw the world's 2nd-longest sub-sea road tunnel and first undersea roundabout.

Minister Stewart in front of the world's first subsea tunnel roundabout in the Faroes.

He said:

It was fascinating to see how the Faroes are using subsea tunnels to bring communities on the archipelago closer together. With three tunnels already operating – including one with the world's first undersea roundabout – another due for completion next year and a fifth in the planning stage, the Faroese are reaping the huge economic, societal and environmental benefits these fixed links bring.

The CEO of the company operating the tunnels was clear to me that he could see no reason why Shetland, Orkney and other Scottish islands could not help solve connectivity issues with similar subsea fixed links. I know this is a live issue under discussion between people on the islands and their representatives and I am happy to share my findings with them and the Scottish Government.

Ultimately it's a matter for those on the islands as to whether this is something they'd like to see developed in the future. Cost is a factor, as it is for ferry renewals, but it's more than about

the pounds and pence – the Faroes have shown how such tunnels can help their communities not only survive, but thrive.

At Tórshavn Military Cemetery, the Minister laid a wreath and paid his respects to World War Two casualties including British sailors who lost their lives when their ships were sunk by enemy action.

In both countries last week's visit was supported by the British Embassy in Copenhagen, part of the UK's extensive diplomatic network.

Minister Stewart pays his respects at a Commonwealth War Grave on the Faroes