

Tánaiste, Ambassador, a Dhaoine Uaisle.

Good evening.

Thank you for the warm welcome we've received since being in this beautiful country. Meghan and I are delighted to be here in Dublin and in the beautiful gardens of Glencairn.

And to the Tánaiste, a special thank you. As some of you may know, he showed my father around his home city of Cork just a couple of weeks ago, so we're very grateful to you for joining us here this evening as well.

My father was telling us last week how much he had enjoyed his recent visit; but said that each of his visits, over the years, holds a special place in his memory. My grandmother, The Queen, also spoke of her own visit in 2011 and the fantastic welcome that she too received.

Standing here with you on this beautiful evening, it is easy to see why Ireland has such a special place in the hearts of my family and indeed, all those who come here.

We're so pleased to be here, for our first official international visit together as a married couple, and we hope it will be the first of many!

As each other's closest neighbours, the UK and Ireland's relationship is unique; our shared history is long and complex. There have of course been challenging, and at times tragic, periods of that relationship.

Tomorrow we hope to have the opportunity to reflect on some of those difficult passages in our history when we visit Croke Park and the Famine Memorial.

On this visit we will also celebrate just how much unites us. This is a very special relationship between two proud, sovereign countries. We share common values; culture, business links, family ties, and possibly a similar sense of humour. Our relationship is of course informed by our history, but it is also one which is now dynamic and forward looking.

This evening we are extremely fortunate to be joined by many of those who are shaping the future of Ireland. You embody the energy which characterises this amazing country and are leaders

in your respective fields: social entrepreneurs harnessing technology to design creative solutions to some of society's most pressing problems; world renowned athletes; award winning actors; and men and women of the defence force who are marking 60 years of service to global peacekeeping missions.

I have the greatest confidence that the friendship, collaboration and mutual understanding that our two countries have built up over the years will endure and it will grow.

I will finish by drawing on the words of President Higgins during his extraordinarily successful visit to the UK in 2014, which we still remember with admiration. He quoted the traditional Irish saying: 'Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine' - "we live in each other's shadows" - we shield each other, and rely on each other for shelter.

That sentiment is as apt now as it was then, as we draw strength from one another as neighbours, partners, and above all friends.

I would like to toast The President of Ireland and the people of Ireland.

Sláinte!