

Your Royal Highnesses, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
It is a joy to be here tonight to speak about the celebrations of the 650<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance.

Portugal-UK 650 celebrations were launched at The Queen's Chapel in St James Palace in 2019. Since then, we have organized more than 300 activities and projects in both countries, in collaboration with 210 institutions, including authorities and civil society, reaching millions of people. The programme has been diverse and inclusive, for all ages from pre-school onwards, decentralized from our respective Capitals, and free of charge.

Our aims were celebrating and promoting our common history; writing new chapters of friendship and cooperation; undertaking scholarly research on the Alliance, and promoting the founding values of the alliance, mentioned in article one of the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1373 that states and I quote: "From henceforth there shall be between us true, faithful, constant and perpetual peace and friendship, union and alliance and league of sincere affection". These values of peace, friendship, truth, faithfulness, constancy, sincerity, kindness, and solidarity have been promoted through education resources, workshops, projects and solidarity events. For example, in the project "Dance in Perpetuity" in partnership with the English National Ballet, each section is dedicated to one of these values. This project initiated in 2021, will continue throughout 2024 and beyond.

I sincerely believe that we have fulfilled all the objectives we set ourselves. We have established long-term legacy projects and collaborations that will cement the bonds of friendship between the citizens of both our Nations, ensuring that the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance, the oldest Alliance still in existence, continues to thrive.

I want to warmly thank all who have contributed to these celebrations: to the 1500 artists that participated in our 57 performances and arts projects, including 14 world premieres; to our 210 partner institutions; to the hundreds of volunteers; and to the 240 researchers and speakers involved in the academic programmes (here a special thanks to the Institute of Political Studies of the Catholic University of Lisbon and to Prof Joao Carlos Espada). Some of the contributors are here tonight and will continue to be ambassadors of our Alliance going forward, to promote a culture of peace and friendship between our Nations and from generation to generation.

And I wish to record our profound gratitude to our Patrons, His Majesty The King and His Excellency the President of Portugal, for their support which has provided much encouragement to us all and for their presence at two events we organized this month: the first one at Buckingham Palace, a guard of honour by the Armed Forces of Portugal and the United Kingdom; the second at St James Palace: a Service of Thanksgiving at The Queen's Chapel, which was the private chapel of Queen Catherine of Braganza, the Portuguese princess who became Queen of Great Britain. This chapel has above the altar and in the West Gallery, her coat of arms combining the arms of both countries.

This event was a great moment of unity. It was attended by royal, civil and military authorities of both countries including His Majesty The King, His Excellency The President of Portugal, the British Foreign Secretary, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, the Chief of Defence Staff, the ambassadors of both countries, including Ambassador Chris Sainty our speaker tonight, and Their Royal Highnesses The Dukes of Braganza. The religious authorities were symbolically present, by a blessing given by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Pope Francis to Portugal-UK 650, for this anniversary, which is extensive to all the participants of the celebrations. So, I conclude, sharing it with everyone present, hoping this Special Blessing of Peace and Friendship may be extensive to all the Nations represented here tonight. Thank you.