



Message by
H.E. Erlan Idrissov
Ambassador of
Kazakhstan to the UK

Astana's EXPO-2017 is the most important global forum to be held on Kazakh soil, and I am proud that the deep connections that exist between our countries are being strengthened and developed.

It comes as no surprise that the United Kingdom was one of the first countries to sign a participation agreement for EXPO 2017, during the visit of Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Republic of Kazakhstan, to the UK two years ago, and the first country to unveil the design of its pavilion in October 2016. This shows a clear commitment to further developing a long-term strategic partnership with Kazakhstan.

This year Kazakhstan and the UK celebrate 25 years of bilateral relations. I consider the UK's EXPO pavilion, which will serve as a business hub for global and bilateral commercial ties, to be a very welcome gift on the occasion of this anniversary. It is also a symbol of the enduring partnership between our nations and an indication of how it will continue to strengthen over the next 25 years.

With its theme of 'Future Energy', EXPO 2017 explores issues that are vital to the future of the planet. I dare say it is the most important event held to date that focuses on creating a clean and sustainable future for us all. Millions of visitors to Astana will have the opportunity to witness developments from around the world in the field of renewable energy for themselves, including the latest advances in areas such as wind power, solar energy, renewable fuel and clean coal technologies.

It is a competitive field, but the UK's pavilion is one of the most noteworthy attractions. It is beautiful inside and our thanks to Asif Khan's design – resembling a yurt, in a respectful nod to Kazakh history and culture – but it also has an important story to tell. I am sure that visitors to the pavilion will enjoy hearing about important innovations such as the development of graphene, which has the potential to radically change the way energy is produced and consumed. From a commercial perspective,

I know it is also an excellent opportunity for UK and Kazakh participants to share knowledge and expand upon business opportunities.

Thanks to the dedication of the team led by the UK's EXPO Commissioner Charles Hendry, the event will live long in the memory of all those who attend. The Duke of Gloucester will open UK National Day on 26th June with a significant business delegation, while the Lord Mayor of the City of London will lead a separate delegation between the 9th – 11th July.

With preparations underway in Astana, a special initiative brought a taste of EXPO-2017 to the people of London. In April, a special mobile pavilion was set up outside the Queen Elizabeth II Centre, just a stone's throw from Parliament, to offer a glimpse of what was in store. This included a spectacular virtual reality tour of the Astana site. I hope it provided some insight into Kazakhstan's capital and persuaded many visitors to make the journey to this modern and vibrant city during the summer of 2017.

I am exceedingly grateful for the United Kingdom's involvement in EXPO-2017 and look forward to benefiting from closer ties between our countries, which have never been as strong and as important as they are now. **E**

Bottom right:
H.E. Erlan Idrissov
and Rupert Goodman,
Chairman of FIRST and
Chairman of BKS

