

Speech by An Tánaiste, Mary Harney T.D.,

at the launch of Transport 21

in

Dublin Castle

on

Tuesday, 1st November 2005

I'm delighted to be here at the launch of this major announcement of our transport capital investment plans.

This announcement represents our most ambitious commitment ever in transport, setting out of our transport plans well into the future. It's a 34 billion Euro blueprint, for the development of our transport infrastructure over the next decade, and it's only been made possible, because this government has now committed to multi-annual spending in certain key areas.

It's this innovation, which now allows us to plan with confidence, a complex transport architecture that will meet the accelerating needs of our growing country.

In fact, we've decided to refer to today's announcement as **Transport 21**, which simply means, meeting Ireland's transport needs as we move into the 21st Century.

We're now just five years into the 21st Century, a century that promises to be like no other in Irish history. We enter this era with more confidence than ever before. We enter this era having enjoyed an unparalleled run of economic success. We enter this era with greater ambition and higher expectation than ever before, and having learned many important lessons about the need for greater efficiency as we invest (as never before) in our future.

Just think of some of the changes that have occurred over the past ten years. In than short time span, our population has grown by 14% to just over 4 million people. The number of people in jobs has risen by nearly 50% up to 1.9 million.

The number of houses being built has gone from 30 thousand a year to nearly 80 thousand and the number of cars on our roads has jumped by 500 thousand up to one and a half million.

Ireland has changed beyond recognition and this government is rolling out a transport infrastructure to cater for the Ireland of the future.

Shortly you will hear the details of **Transport 21**: - you will hear how it will apply to the whole country, not just the Greater Dublin Area. You will hear our plans to make major developments along the west coast of Ireland. You will hear of massive investment in a metro in Dublin and of a new Luas line to Lucan. You will hear of our plans to strengthen cross border links and of our plans for our major cities and towns. And you will see that the emphasis will be on interlinking the various services.

It's a plan, setting out systems of which we all will be justifiably proud. In the last years, who amongst us hasn't spoken with pride of the advances our country has made...this plan will see our infrastructure catch up with, and surpass our needs for developments in the future.

And let me make this promise to the taxpayers of the country. It's your money that makes these developments possible. With so many people at work, and with the economy in such good shape, we can now together transform our transport systems to place them at a level never before thought possible. This government will make certain that the lessons of the past are applied and that these massive developments will be put in place with an enormous emphasis on efficiency and cost.

ENDS.

