



Press Release
Thursday 7th March 2024

Building a Sustainable All-Island Top of the Agenda at Newry & Dundalk Chambers' Cross-Border Conference

Over 300 business delegates from across the island of Ireland attended a major cross-border conference on Wednesday 6th March in the Carrickdale Hotel to hear of the need to build a Sustainable All-Island Economy.

The conference was jointly hosted by Newry Chamber of Commerce & Trade and Dundalk Chamber and supported by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Louth County Council, InterTradeIreland, Louth Local Enterprise Office, M1 Corridor and Dundalk Chamber Skillnet.

This year's conference was addressed by **Neale Richmond TD**, Minister for State in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and NI Economy Minister, **Conor Murphy MLA**.

In his address, Minister Murphy said that building and sustaining cross-border co-operation and trade is key to the growth of our businesses.

He added: "The Windsor Framework protects the all-Ireland economy and cross-border trade is surging. Now that there is a degree of political certainty on our trading arrangements, it is time to fully grasp the opportunities."

Minister Richmond told a packed Carrickdale: "Now is the time for political leaders of all traditions to come together to focus on building the all-island economy."

"The border counties have been left behind for too long, our state agencies must now prioritise this region to ensure we can make up for lost time."

The conference was also attended by **the United States Ambassador to Ireland, Claire Cronin** who was warmly welcomed. She told delegates of her country's deep commitment to investing in Ireland North and South and the development of the All-Island economy.

She also highlighted the 'unique opportunity' that is now available to the Northern Ireland economy following the Windsor Framework and the restoration of the NI Executive and vowed that the United States would continue to work to deliver investment through President Biden's Special Economic Envoy, Joe Kennedy, who she said had 'hit the ground running.'

The conference heard from a total of 20 speakers from both sides of the border across the four themes of Skills & People, Business Supports, Sustainability and the All-Island Economy and hosted by Boardcaster and Journalist, Mark Simpson.



Speaking after the event, Newry Chamber President Edwina Flynn said: “The conference has been an enormous success with such a varied range of speakers across so many specialisms and levels of expertise and I would like to thank everyone who spoke and contributed at what was an excellent event. “

“We have a fantastic working relationship with our partners in Dundalk Chamber and both our Chambers have led the way for many years on driving cross-border trade. We are entering a time of huge opportunity in the North with the potential that can flow from the Framework and the restoration of the NI Executive.”

“The conference highlighted those opportunities and the challenges that we face but also gave our 300 plus delegates plenty of information and insight to take back to their businesses.”

Una McGoey, President of Dundalk Chamber of Commerce and Trade said: “This conference has been a beacon for the promotion of cross-border trade for many years and our partnership with Newry Chamber continues to flourish and set an example of how collaboration can bring benefits to both sides of the border.”

“The aim of the conference is to promote Building a Sustainable All-Ireland Economy and our speakers and panellists demonstrated how this can be done and what challenges we need to meet along the way. There is so much economic potential across this island and in particular the M1 corridor. We all now need to play our part in grasping those opportunities that are coming our way.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

(Back L-R) Councillor John Reilly, Councillor Paula Butterly Cathaoirleach Louth CC, Edwina Flynn President Newry Chamber, Councillor Conor Keelan, Mar Simpson, MC Ruarai O’Murchu TD Una McGoey President Dundalk Chamber, Councillor Valerie Harte Chair Newry Mourne and Down DC, Paddy Malone PRO Dundalk Chamber, Senator John McGahon.

(Front L-R) Senator Erin McGreehan, Neale Richmond TD, Minister for State in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Conor Murphy, NI Economy Minister and Senator John McGahon.

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