

Irish Ports Conference 2008

Address by Patrick Traynor, Chairman, Drogheda Port Company

Minister of State, Chairman, Colleagues from the Regional Development Department in Northern Ireland, Our guests from the United Nations and Africa, Fellow Delegates, Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,

On behalf of Drogheda Port Company I would like to welcome you to The Irish Ports Association annual Irish Ports Conference. We at Drogheda Port are delighted to be hosting the conference this year, at a particularly exciting time in our development as a port.

We have a very informative set of presentations lined up today on our theme of **‘moving the nations goods’**. There is no doubting the importance of the Irish commercial seaports in facilitating the movement of goods into and out of the state, they are the lifeblood of our trading economy and we look forward to hosting an open, informative and cutting edge conference today.

This is a hugely critical time for the future development of our industry. Currently, as most of you are aware, the ambitious development programme being proposed by the Irish ports industry for the next 10 years and beyond is unprecedented. Projects being proposed by Bremore Ireland Port, Cork, Galway, Rosslaire, Waterford, Dublin and Greenore Ports will not only ensure future port capacity but illustrates that the industry is responding innovatively to the provision of new and expanded facilities not only on economic terms but equally on environmental and wider community terms.

The current planning climate is certainly difficult and unpredictable for major port projects with so many competing and conflicting agendas. This makes it more important that as an industry we think outside the traditional box in terms of our port developments.

The primary function of seaports is to facilitate trade. To do this effectively demands that seaports offer and maintain higher levels of efficiency at reducing cost. Seaports must be able to achieve these aims whilst also ensuring that what we do is environmentally sustainable.

An ever-increasing share of world trade is carried in containers, current growth trends indicate at its most basic level, that a doubling of port capacity will be needed every 15-20 years. Today, even more and more different types of goods are being transported in containers. This is primarily as a consequence of three factors – lower transport costs, the extended global reach of megacarriers and a reconfiguration of the box sizes– with these factors resulting in ever-greater volumes of container traffic.

Consolidation and vertical integration is increasingly evident in the global shipping sector with the larger shipping companies getting even bigger and increasing their span of control on the transport chain. New vessel builds in the deep sea container trade are getting progressively larger as well as those involved in the short sea market to the extent that increasingly only some ports in Ireland will be able to handle these large ships

As vessel size and capacity continue to rise, the challenge of keeping up the development of our ports to cater to these ships has become crucial.

I have spoken mostly about the unitized trade but our regional ports each have a vital role to play in the future and are adapting to their changing environments.

It would be remiss of me not to mention our Bremore development given the considerable interest in its progress. Our joint venture project with Treasury Holdings has been given full departmental and cabinet approval.

A formal application has been made to An Bord Pleanála under Section 37A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended and Bremore Port Ireland is currently engaged in pre-application consultation meetings with An Bord Pleanála.

A full international design team was appointed in January 2008 and the team is currently working towards the completion of an operational port design and planning application. Hutchison Westports Limited, the leading terminal operator in the world, has joined our team to develop and operate a Terminal Master Plan.

Detailed environmental baseline assessments have been underway for some months including the detailed evaluation of such issues as archaeology, ecology, landscape and noise. A detailed appraisal of route corridor options for the primary port access road from the M1 Motorway is also being undertaken.

Bremore Ireland Port Limited is also engaged in discussions with the Department of Transport; the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government, the National Parks and Wildlife Service; the National Roads Authority; Fingal County Council and Meath County Council.

The Bremore Ireland Port proposal comprises the construction on a phased basis of an entirely new integrated multi-modal deepwater port to cater for up to 50 million tonnes of annual freight traffic. The proposed new port will cater for load-on/load off, Roll-on/Roll-off, bulk and passenger traffic.

With a design depth of 14 meters the new port will have the deepest shipping berths on the east coast of Ireland and will therefore be suitable to accommodate the increasing demands for new generation deeper drafted freight ships.

The proposed ultimate traffic volume of 50 million tones per annum will constitute a significant share of total Irish port traffic. We consider it to be of critical importance that any proposed port development takes place on a site which has significant expansion potential which is available to be realised as and when required, and is part of an overall design which allows from an engineering perspective for future expansion.

Bremore Ireland Port is proposed to be operational in 2013.

Increasingly international ports are adopting strategies where they identify themselves as part of a wider transport and logistics system and engage in other, related activities, thus actively encouraging port centric logistics in the port area. Professor John Mangan will speak in more detail on this emerging topic.

In conclusion I am glad to have had the opportunity to have updated you on our project and along with our Joint Venture partners, Treasury Holdings we look forward to welcoming you to the opening of our world class deep-water Port at Bremore in the near future.

We expect the socio economic benefits to have a wide reach in this area, with particularly the citizens of Louth, Meath and Fingal benefiting considerably.

I hope fellow delegates that you have an interesting and informative conference.

Patrick Traynor 26.09.08