



PRESS RELEASE

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LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD: STRENGTHENING IRELAND'S COMPETITIVENESS.

On June 7, 2012, U.S. Ambassador to Ireland Daniel M. Rooney will host the annual Embassy conference at Croke Park in Dublin from 09:30 – 14:30. This year's theme is "Leveling the Playing Field: Strengthening Ireland's Competitiveness." RTE Radio and Television personality Miriam O'Callaghan will facilitate the opening of the Forum and moderate the panel discussions.

The goal of the conference is to address issues related to competitiveness, using the importance of diversity and opportunity as key drivers to economic stabilization and recovery. An underlying driver to this was how to take some of the key tenets of the Rooney Rule and apply them to business and society. Every economy must continue to adapt in order to compete with the constantly changing global marketplace demands and industry needs. Future Irish competitive strength will rely on the ability to foster a culture of ideas and innovation.

An Taoiseach Enda Kenny T.D. will give a keynote address and Minister for Education and Skills Ruairi Quinn T.D. will participate in a panel discussion at the conference.

William R. Johnson, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the H. J. Heinz Company will also address the gathering. With more than \$10 billion in annual sales, Heinz's 50 companies have leading brands in more than 200 countries. The Heinz® brand enjoys international renown and accounts for more than \$3 billion in annual sales.

Other participants in the conference include Norah Casey, CEO of Harmonia; Mark Waller, Chief Marketing Officer with the NFL, Eamon Dunphy, Broadcaster & Journalist and Cathriona Hallahan Managing Director, EOC Microsoft Ireland.

Ambassador Rooney noted: “As Ireland works through its difficult economic times, it is clear that improving competitiveness will help. I have always believed that to be truly successful everyone needs an equal chance to compete. This is true in sports and this is true in business.”

ONLINE

The official webpage of the Forum is <http://dublin.usembassy.gov/conference>. The conference will be streamed live on this webpage. The event can also be followed on Twitter at [@usembassydublin](https://twitter.com/usembassydublin) (*#compete*).

For further information please contact:

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