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Tánaiste: Economic Progress has to be Embedded in a Free, Open, Progressive Society

The Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, **Eamonn Gilmore TD** today (21st June) in a speech at a GLEN event hosted by **Google** in Dublin, linked progress in Ireland for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people to the progress Ireland needs to make to rebuild its economy.

“Economic progress has to be embedded in a free, open, progressive society” said **Tánaiste Eamonn Gilmore TD**. “We have to construct new ways to build our vision of society where social solidarity and prosperity go hand in hand”.

The Tánaiste celebrated that Ireland has been transformed over the last 50 years from a closed and mainly agricultural economy to one of the most open and high-tech in the world; that Ireland has gone “from coal to cloud in little more than a generation”. He also acknowledged that while **“Ireland today is a modern outward-looking society, our progress is not complete. There is still work to do.”**

“Equality for LGBT people is increasingly an indicator of the diversity and openness of a society, key attributes of the most successful cities in a more globalised world” said **Kieran Rose, GLEN Chair**.

“Ireland’s competitiveness is becoming increasingly determined by the quality of our workforce. Diversity and equality are critical to nurturing, attracting and retaining the skills and capacities on which the knowledge economy depends” continued Rose.

“Public, political and now corporate support are evolving and recognising that it is good for individuals, for families, for a country, and now for business, to ensure that lesbian and gay people are treated equally” said Rose. “We applaud the initiatives of Google, and of many other companies, public and private, who are implementing measures to ensure the full participation of LGBT people within their workplaces, many as members of the GLEN Diversity Champions Programme” said Rose.

Google is a leader in this area and provides strong supports for their LGBT staff. **Clément Toulemonde, Head of Gayglers Chapter Ireland** said, “Googlers are passionate about making the world a better place, and are constantly finding ways to promote social change through their work and in their personal lives outside of the company.”

“Progressive and innovative companies today have powerful equality and diversity programmes and can deliver on equality for LGBT people, and for others, within the work environment. But they also require that the same qualities of equality and diversity are embedded in society” said Rose.

“We have made great progress in embedding equality and diversity in Irish society, but our journey is not yet complete”, said Rose. Noting that a referendum on marriage for lesbian and gay couples is likely in 2014, the Tánaiste said **“we do not believe that the State has any right to rule over the human heart”**. The Tánaiste also noted that the Heads of Bill for Gender Recognition legislation were forthcoming.

“We cannot afford to put our society into suspended animation. We must still turn our face towards progress...We must continue to build a modern Ireland based on prosperity and openness, solidarity and freedom” concluded the Tánaiste.

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Editors Notes

Gayglers is Google’s employee network group for LGBT employees, friends, and allies.

Gayglers chapters exist just about everywhere Google operates around the world and in the last year, more than a thousand Googlers participated in Pride celebrations in a dozen cities worldwide, including Dublin, to support equality with as many planning to take part in 2013 Pride celebrations.

GLEN’s Diversity Champions Programme is Ireland’s first and only not-for-profit workplace programme designed specifically to assist Irish employers with the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employees. For further information visit

www.diversitychampions.glen.ie