

Speech delivered by Dana Strong, CEO of UPC Ireland at Limerick Chamber Event on Securing the Future of Shannon Airport, on Friday 27th January at the Radisson Hotel.

Good morning everyone, Minister Varadkar, Minister of State Jan O'Sullivan, Deputies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen.

Thank you Gordon for your introduction.

Clearly we at UPC Ireland are delighted to be associated with Limerick Chamber and to support our fellow members as we meet here this morning.

I know that you want to hear directly from the Minister on important matters so I will keep my comments brief.

I would just like to provide you with a small number of points around UPC's operations in Ireland and the MidWest which is a very important region for our company.

To an extent, you could say that UPC is also involved in transport. However, the transport infrastructure that we operate isn't one of trains, planes or automobiles. It is instead a technologically advanced, next generation broadband infrastructure.

As a multinational company, UPC is a strategic, long term investor in all markets we operate in.

In that regard, I'm pleased to say we are one of Ireland's top foreign direct investment partners and that is in monetary, employment and service terms.

To date, we have invested over €900 million euro in our operations in Ireland. That includes acquisitions and over €400 million investment as part of our roll-out of new Next Generation Network across Ireland.

Right now, we are delivering superfast Internet access to Government departments, major hospitals, multinationals and to businesses the length and breadth of the country.

We're a major employer with over 840 people, we employ 380 here in Limerick and we support a further 600 jobs in supplying companies.

I think that for a knowledge based economy like Ireland, having a Next Generation Network is essential to future success. And in terms of the lifeblood of that economy, our next generation network is carrying massive amounts of vital business information, global accessibility and content for hundreds of thousands of our customers across the country.

We're also driving broadband access in the residential sector. Through UPC's 400 million euro plus infrastructural investment, well over half a million households nationwide are now capable of 100 megabit Internet access. This includes 97% of cabled households in Limerick. Nationwide, over 700,000 homes are already capable of 30 megabit access speeds. And we will be increasing these speeds in the future.

So, in conclusion, our investments are enhancing business competitiveness for our customers. And we are providing an important stimulus for businesses locally here in the MidWest and nationally across all sectors of the economy.

The vision that we have for UPC is one where we will continue to drive all of these developments - promoting economic renewal and digital inclusion for everyone in Ireland... Because it is by making that kind of contribution, and through your support, that we as a company will continue to be successful.

Thank you very much.

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