



President Kennedy's Visit Inspired Irish People to Greater Self-Belief and Confidence - Minister Séamus Brennan

**Major New Year-Long Exhibition on the 1963 Visit-
'A Journey Home: John F. Kennedy and Ireland' - to Open in
Boston**

The Minister for Social Affairs, Séamus Brennan T.D., speaking in Boston, has described the visit by President John F. Kennedy to Ireland in 1963 as an inspiration to the country and an important contribution to the growth of greater self-belief and confidence in the people.

Minister Brennan was speaking at a special preview of a major new exhibition-'A Journey Home: John F. Kennedy and Ireland'- which will open later this year in Boston. The John F. Kennedy Library Foundation embarked on the exhibition to commemorate the famous visit to Ireland of President Kennedy in 1963. The exhibition is due to run for a year and the library plan to host a number of high profile events during the exhibition.

Minister Brennan said: "Although over 40 years have passed since that famous event, John F. Kennedy retains a special and enduring place in the hearts of the Irish people – those who reside in Ireland and our millions of emigrants, including Irish Americans. John F. Kennedy was an inspiration to Ireland in the 1960s. His visit marked a great time of change and the beginnings of prosperity on our island. In those 40 years, Ireland has gone on to transform itself to become ranked amongst the most affluent nations in the world. Indeed, if history had not dealt such a cruel blow and if the President were to have lived to visit Ireland today, I imagine that he would be pleasantly surprised with the amount of progress and very proud of what has been achieved. In many ways, I believe that his inspirational leadership contributed to the important political decisions we were making at the time and ultimately led us to take greater control of our future development".

Minister Brennan recalled that during his visit, in a reference to one of our great writers -George Bernard Shaw - President Kennedy said "We need men who can dream of things that never were".



Department of Social and Family Affairs

"I think that in the few short days that he spent in Ireland, President Kennedy set us challenges to dream of an Ireland that never was," Minister Brennan said. "I believe that he inspired us as a people to dream of the possibility of progress and prosperity. In addition, this unique leader brought with him a fresh approach to global issues. His visit helped Ireland to look outwardly to other countries and to remember our own emigrants that left Ireland and the great contribution that they made to the nations that they settled in. Today, the Irish Government is fully committed to assisting our emigrants who reside abroad, particularly those who are most in need. We are also committed to embracing the multi-cultural society that Ireland is now becoming. It is a new experience, and a new opportunity. We must grasp that opportunity by making sure that we blend compassion with practical responses. We must achieve the balance that sensibly absorbs immigrants into our expanding society so that all are cherished equally".

Minister Brennan concluded: "Before he departed from Ireland, President Kennedy remarked in Co. Galway, my own birthplace: 'You send us home covered with gifts, which we can barely carry, but most of all you send us home with the warmest memories of you and your country'. President Kennedy's legacy will never be forgotten by the people of Ireland. I encourage everyone to take the opportunity to tour this fascinating exhibition. For those of us who remember the visit it will bring back wonderful memories. For the later generations it will serve as an insight into the warmth, compassion and inspirational qualities of a truly greater leader".

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