

St. Patrick's Day

Ireland stands ready to help Japan

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AMBASSADOR OF IRELAND

A National Holiday should be a cause for celebration, but this year, St. Patrick's Day is overshadowed by the tragic events that occurred as a result of the earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan last Friday.



On the behalf of the government and people of Ireland, I offer our deepest sympathies to those who have been bereaved or injured, and to those who have lost their homes or their livelihoods following this ter-

rible disaster.

The president of Ireland, Mary McAleese, the prime minister of Ireland, Enda Kenny, T.D., and the deputy prime minister and minister for foreign affairs of Ireland, Eamon Gilmore, T.D., have all sent messages of sympathy to their Japanese counterparts. They have assured them that Ireland stands ready to help the people of Japan at this most difficult time.

We send our best wishes to the rescue teams and emergency services that are helping to find and assist the survivors of the disaster. We hope that, with the efforts of all the people of Japan, those in the affected areas will soon

recover from the losses they have suffered.

In Ireland, the last two years have brought many challenges to our country. However, we are on a path to recovery. Following the general election on Feb. 25, a new government was appointed last week and they are already working to get the economy moving, fix the banking system and support the protection and creation of jobs.

We face a very difficult few years ahead but we are confident that with efforts along the lines we have planned, Ireland will continue to make progress.

Ireland still has many strengths that make it an at-

tractive location for business. Ireland is ranked first in the eurozone for ease of doing business, we have a young, highly educated, flexible workforce and an open economy with a focus on enterprise. Indeed, many Japanese companies such as Alps, Daiwa and Orix, and in the pharmaceutical sector, Takeda and Astellas, have chosen Ireland as a location for their investments.

Normally a series of events are held to mark our national day. However, as a mark of respect for the victims of the enormous tragedy currently unfolding in Japan, the embassy and various organizers have decided to postpone our planned events.