

Tuesday 16th October 2018

Leave No One Behind Summit

Message of the President Michael D Higgins – Under Embargo

What is needed now is the transformation of the inspiring promises to “leave no-one behind” into tangible policy objectives

I would like to send my best wishes to all those taking part in the “Leave No One Behind” Summit on Zero Hunger Day, and one day before the UN End Poverty Day.

Seventy years after the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris, let us not forget that global hunger is one of the greatest human rights violations of the 21st century.

We know that the source of hunger today is not lack of food, but poverty created and sustained by stark inequalities across the world.

If we are to truly stand in solidarity with our most vulnerable and marginalized fellow global citizens we must also stand, together, against the unrestrained impulses of greed and insatiable consumption, which the consequent division, domination, hatred and intolerance that leads to such abuse of human rights.

The work of human rights campaigning and advocacy has never been more important or more challenging.

Today, let us also commit to responding to the clarion call of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, by which the nations of the world agreed to “Leave No One Behind”. Let us continue to call for urgent action, always in support of – and prioritising – those who are the most vulnerable in our societies.

We are now three years into the timeframe world leaders set for the implementation of the ambitious plan that should see the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 – Goals that the 193 members of the United Nations agreed can only be reached unless they have been met everywhere, and for everyone.

It is my hope that your campaigning, your awareness-raising, your analysis and your frontline work with those that are “furthest behind” will serve to inspire policy makers everywhere.

What is needed now is the transformation of the inspiring promises to “leave no-one behind” into tangible policy objectives and measures that ensure the dignity of all, and the achievement of the Global Goals for all nations, all peoples, and all areas of society.