



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN  
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

**Message from President Michael D. Higgins**  
**Irish Consortium on Gender-Based Violence**  
**25<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

On this, the 2024 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, may I send my best wishes to all those taking part in this year's Irish Consortium on Gender-Based Violence Conference.

May I say how grateful I am to all those who work so hard and with such dedication to addressing this most serious ethical challenge of our time. May I pay tribute to the Irish Consortium on Gender-Based Violence, who today launch its critical new research report, *From Survivor-Centred to Survivor-Led: Lessons from Promising Survivor-Led Gender-Based Violence Accountability Initiatives*.

This report gives voice to those who have too often been silenced, voices that can make a difference, voices of those who have not only survived violence but have found the strength to lead in the pursuit of justice and healing, bringing forward lessons from countries including Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya. They present stories of how conflict, social inequalities, and systemic injustices have fuelled gender-based violence, but also, and it is important, information on circumstances where survivors have been courageously transforming systems from within.

The transition from survivor-centred approaches to survivor-led action seeks a profound shift in policy and practice — one that places survivors' agency at the heart of justice efforts. It is a powerful, enduring call for justice, dignity and action, highlighting that those who have endured the deepest wounds must be central to building solutions, shaping policies, and ensuring accountability.

There can be no doubt that the crafting of a society with the stamp of an ever-deepening recognition of equality is a duty that must be shared by all, and that any sustaining silence as to the acceptance of a society that allows for injustice, inequalities and violence to persist unchallenged perpetuates an exclusionary society that fails us all.

In being united in commitment and positive action we can, together, construct the foundations for a better, stronger and more just society.

May I say how greatly proud I was to have been asked, in 2015, by the UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women to inscribe my name on the list of those committed to being a HeForShe champion.

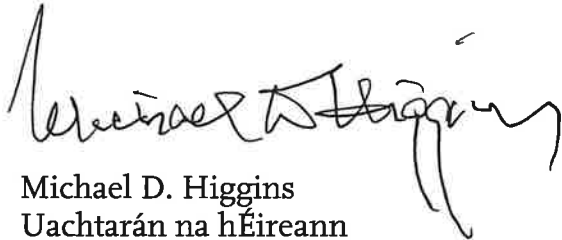
In taking up my role as a HeforShe champion I, along with a number of other Heads of State and Heads of Government, committed to a campaign which invites people around the world to stand together as equal partners to craft a shared vision of a gender-equal world, committed, too, to using the influence of our Offices to convey a simple but vital message: that men must stand in solidarity with women if women's rights are to be fully achieved.

Today, on this the 2024 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, as we stand in solidarity with survivors around the world, let us be inspired by their leadership and committed to amplifying their voices.

Together, let us reaffirm our resolve to creating a future where every woman and girl can live free from violence, fear, and oppression, a world where equality and safety are guaranteed for all.

Mar Uachtarán na hÉireann, may I wish the Irish Consortium on Gender-Based Violence a most fulfilling and fruitful conference, and every success as you continue with your vital work.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh is beir gach beannacht d'on todcháí.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael D. Higgins', written in a cursive style.

Michael D. Higgins  
Uachtarán na hÉireann  
President of Ireland