



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

Message from President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins

World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs

2nd – 9th August 2021

May I say how honoured I am to provide this message of support from Ireland to the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs.

While the world continues to face the challenges of the global pandemic, we cannot forget the core purpose of the vital work of you and others to rid the world of nuclear weapons and to assist in the achievement of a safer and more peaceful future for all of humanity. As UN Secretary-General Guterres commented recently, nothing less than the very survival of humanity and civilisation is at stake.

The year 2021 opened with a significant development, with the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Ireland was proud to have enacted the Treaty on 6th August 2020, on the very date that marked the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Ireland did so on that day in recognition of the harm endured by the victims and *hibakusha*, and the need to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again.

The contribution of the *hibakusha* and civil society was, and remains, central to the Treaty's creation, and now its implementation. I salute them for the vital role they play in disarmament education. It is important that the experiences and legacy of the *hibakusha* be carried forward for the next generation, so that they are aware of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and are inspired to work for their elimination.

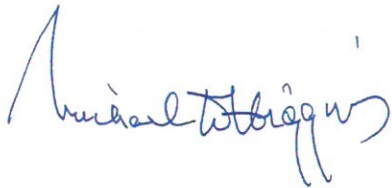
The world is facing wholly unprecedented challenges, with not only the Covid-19 pandemic touching all of our lives in different ways, but also the challenges of climate change, geo-political tensions, and with 41 million of our global citizens facing famine, as Secretary-General Guterres reminds us in his recent urgent appeal to Heads of States and Governments, it is imperative for our safe, peaceful and equitable co-existence that we work in cooperation to find sustainable solutions to these challenges. Nuclear disarmament is at the core of a more sustainable, more secure future. The pandemic has starkly illustrated that risks, however unlikely they may seem, can materialise with such devastating global consequences.

It is in this broader context that the elimination of nuclear weapons takes on even greater urgency. Basic morality tells us that it is impossible to justify the existence of a technology that is so indiscriminately destructive and harmful as nuclear weapons.

How regrettable it is that the human endeavour and vast resources that are involved in developing and maintaining nuclear weapons – over 13,000 of which remain stockpiled and deployed globally – that resources are not instead directed to fund health, education, food and water security, and other developmental and humanitarian purposes.

Ireland has a historic attachment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which remains the cornerstone of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is more important than ever that all states commit to make progress on nuclear disarmament, and Ireland stands ready to work with all parties to do so.

I commend your resilience in convening this vital Conference in these challenging, exceptional circumstances which add weight to the significance of your message heard around the world, and I send my best wishes for the success of the Conference this year, and reiterate the support of Ireland for your important work.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Michael D. Higgins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "D. Higgins".

Michael D. Higgins

Uachtarán na hÉireann

President of Ireland