

Michael D Higgins: Acceptance Speech

Michael D Higgins was elected ninth President of Ireland on October 27, 2011. You can view a visualization of the key words from the speech [here on the Many Eyes website](#), based on a transcript by [Molonesi](#).

Watch the Youtube video for the full speech including [the introduction in Irish](#).

I will be a president for all the people and from this moment I will cease to be a member and president of the Labour Party, a party which has informed my thinking and the ethos of my life, a party the centenary of whose founding by James Connolly and James Larkin will be celebrated next year.

For the presidency is an independent office and the Irish people, which I appreciate so much and I take with such responsibility, have given a very clear mandate on a very clear set of ideas to me as the ninth president.

I would like to thank, as I said, sincerely those who voted for me, but also I acknowledge those who voted for the other candidates who during a long and difficult campaign offered many valuable suggestions which I hope to include and encompass over the next seven years.

And I want to be a president too for those who didn't vote, whose trust in public institutions I will encourage and work to recover. And always in my mind too will be those who have gone away, and I will be their president too.

The oath I will take when I'm inaugurated, 'Mo lándícheall a dhéanamh ar son leasa is fónaimh mhuintir na hÉireann – I dedicate my abilities to the service and welfare of the people

of Ireland', is a great responsibility.[Irish: "and I accept this challenge fully in these difficult times we are experiencing."]

The mandate I have received and for which I will seek with heart and head to implement over the next seven years had its four pillars in an inclusive citizenship, which is about equality, participation and respect. In a creative society, creative and excellent in everything we Irish do, making an Irishness to be proud of in a real republic.

This was a vision of a real republic where life and language, where ideals and experience, have the ring of authenticity, which we need now as we go forward.

And during a long campaign, which for me, as I have said, was almost 14 months since I first sought a nomination from the Labour Party, I saw and felt and feel the pain of the Irish people.

I recognise the need for a reflection on those values and assumptions often carelessly taken that have brought us to such a sorry pass in social and economic terms, for which such a high price has been paid and is being paid.

I recognise the righteous anger but I also saw the need for healing and to move past recrimination.

I love our shared island, our shared Ireland, and its core decencies. I love it for its imagination and its celebration of the endless possibilities for our people.

That are there for the achieving as we leave behind a narrow individualism that valued the person for what was assumed to be their accumulated wealth but neglected the connection between the person, the social, the community and the nation.

That is what we all leave behind now, for which a million people gave me a mandate. Now we must respond collectively and

co-operatively to what we all must recognise as our shared problems, be it unemployment, mortgage distress or any form of exclusion.

We must now work to our strengths at home and abroad, not only co-operatively and collectively but sustainably for the benefit of all of our present generations and those to come.

The necessary transformation of which I speak and of which my presidency will be a part is built on turning creative possibilities into living realities for all our people, and I believe – this was the wonderful thing about going round the country so often – I believe and recognise that that transformation has already begun.

I saw it in one community after another, be it in those who are creating strategies with and for the unemployed; those working in care, those working in pre-school and after-school class, those great citizens. Everywhere good people have commenced a journey to a version of Irishness of which we can be proud.

And this campaign, we must never forget, involved a choice as to which version of Irishness we would choose for the next seven years, as what we wanted as ourselves at home and abroad. This necessary transformation, which has now begun, will I hope result in making the values of equality, respect and participation in an active citizenship the characteristic of the next seven years. The reconnection of society, economy and ethics is a project we cannot postpone.

I have encountered in this long campaign an enthusiasm for an Irishness that will be built on recognising again those sources from which spring the best of our reason and curiosity.

But even more important is the powerful instinct for decency which must be at the heart of a real republic: the celebration of the power of the collective in pursuit of the best of

ourselves.

And based too on the power of culture, science and technology, delivered through the contemporary genius of our people.

Ireland has made its choice for the future and it has chosen the version of Irishness it will be. I know and I will work with head and heart to be part with all of you in creating that future, one in which all of us can be part of and proud too.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh...[Thank you very much]