



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

2017 St Patrick's Day Message from President Michael D. Higgins

On this St. Patrick's Day 2017 may I, on this special day for the Irish at home and abroad, send my warmest greetings as Uachtarán na hÉireann President of Ireland to Irish people, wherever they may be, and in whatever circumstance, and greetings too to all those who are joining us in celebrating our National Day and our rich cultural heritage.

It is a source of pride to all of us Irish that our National Day is celebrated not just here in Ireland, but in countless places around the world where members of the Irish global family have been able to make their homes. We are, as a people with a wide diaspora, happy to have the opportunity to share our national day with those who will join us in our celebration of our culture, our songs and our language.

As a migrant people, the Irish have brought their culture and traditions to many new homelands, and in doing so they have been peerless ambassadors for our nation. It is thanks to the millions of Irish emigrants that Irishness, and our Irish national day, is celebrated with such affection and enthusiasm all over the globe.

It is appropriate that we celebrate as our National Day the Day of St. Patrick, whose own life story was one of hardship and migration. St. Patrick, we are told, was trafficked into Ireland as a slave, managed to escape, but chose to leave his native land again and return to Ireland. In the centuries that followed, migration has remained a constant feature of the Irish experience, defining us as a people, and shaping our outlook on the world.

Since taking office I have set out to visit many of our Irish communities abroad, to be given the opportunity to hear their experiences and to connect with their hopes and concerns. Then too, over 80,000 people have visited Sabina and I at Áras an Uachtaráin – people who are active in community groups and civil society organisations who are building an

inclusive, sustainable and fair society. Their passion, energy and commitment are building blocks of our nation, and their practical actions of solidarity provide the threads that make up the multi-coloured tapestry that is our Irish nation today.

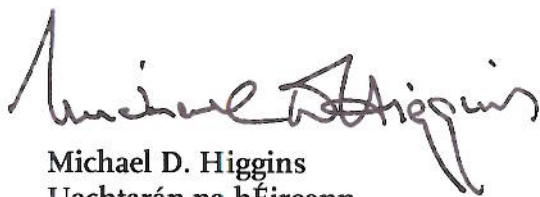
Today, on St. Patrick's Day, we celebrate Irishness at its best, and we reflect on the impact our culture and heritage have had around the world.

This Spring, as nature signals the beginning of the season of hope and renewal, let us all work to build the future we hope for and that is rich in shared possibilities.

Let us renew our commitment to build on the rich seam of Irish achievements and creativity, in fields as diverse as the arts, science, humanitarianism, politics and business, and work, together, towards achieving the best version of ourselves, for all of us Irish, for our children, our children's children and for all those with whom we share this vulnerable planet.

To my fellow Irish citizens, and to our friends celebrating the day with us: May I wish you a happy and enjoyable St. Patrick's Day 2017.

Beir beannacht.



Michael D. Higgins
Uachtarán na hÉireann
President of Ireland

17th March 2017