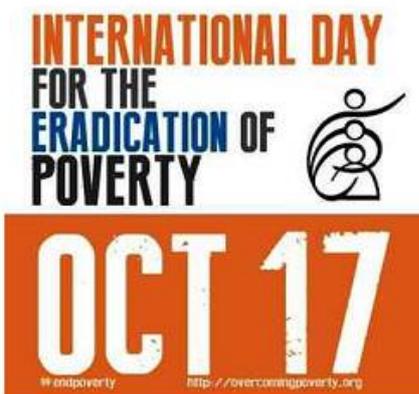




**Growing Together to Leave No One Behind  
UN Day for the Eradication of Poverty  
17 October 2016 – Dublin**



**Messages from the  
#EndPoverty Day**



## Listening to Unheard Voices

On 17 October 1987, in the presence of 100,000 activists, Joseph Wresinski, founder of the International Movement **All Together in Dignity – ATD** ([www.atdireland.ie](http://www.atdireland.ie)), unveiled a Commemorative Stone on the Trocadero Human Rights Plaza in Paris. On this marble Wresinski's call is engraved:

***“Wherever men and women are condemned to live in poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights are respected is our solemn duty.”***

Since then, this commemorative stone has become a rallying point for people from all walks of life. 17 October was declared **“International Day for the Eradication of Poverty”** by the United Nations in 1992.

The 17 October 2008 saw the unveiling of a commemorative stone on Custom House Quay near the Famine Memorial in Dublin.



**On the 17 October every year, we come together in Ireland and around the world in friendship and solidarity with those who face chronic and severe poverty, honouring their struggles and renewing our determination to work for a world where everyone's human rights and human dignity are respected.**

**[www.17october.ie](http://www.17october.ie)**





## We Are Humanity – NYP2 Band

*Verse 1*

I come from Eritrea, and we come from Poland,  
 We come from Mauritius, and we from Ireland.  
 We all live together, in peace and harmony  
 Here in Dublin city, we are humanity.

*Chorus*

**We are one , but we are many,  
 We come, from every  
 land and sea,  
 We share a dream, and sing with one voice,  
 I will, you will, we'll end  
 world poverty**

*Verse 2*

We gather here together, on this October day,  
 We want the world to listen, to what we've  
 got to say,  
 Millions live in hunger, millions live in fear ,  
 The cries of children dying, some refuse to  
 hear.

**Chorus**

*Verse 3*

Yes, we must all stand together, or at least  
 we must all try.  
 To help our fellow human beings, and listen to  
 their cry.  
 So let's stand beside  
 our refugees, and keep  
 an open door  
 Let's open up our hearts  
 and minds, and stand  
 beside the poor.

**Chorus**

*Verse 4*

Let's make the world  
 a better place, where everybody shares,  
 Where peace and justice they prevail, and  
 everybody cares.  
 We can talk about our values, and preach  
 solidarity ,  
 But we are all just hypocrites, unless we end  
 world poverty.

**Chorus**

## The Lord Mayor of Dublin - Brendan Carr

Welcome everyone to the North side of Dublin City, which I believe is the best side, I know we have people here from all around the country and around the world and it's great to see everyone here.

Today is an event which I don't like to use the term celebrate because it's something that we're actually trying to observe and understand what's happening in the world today. It is an international event it isn't just here in Ireland. All over the world people are being reminded of the plague which has gone across this planet with nearly 1 billion people are living in poverty and 800 million people not being able to get a proper meal and living with malnutrition. It is vitally important that those of us, who can live what we call a normal life, do everything we possibly can to help our fellow man survive through this. We have to remember that poverty isn't just a financial thing. You can have health inequalities, education inequalities and a lot of this is hitting our own city here in Dublin. So not only is it an international event but it's one at home that is very close to our hearts and one we're going to have to put a stop to.

I think it shows, with the amount of people here today, a clear commitment from the Dublin people that we will do everything possible to put an end and eradicate poverty once and for all in this world. I think the President's arrival is a signal of how important this event is and I just want to finish up by thanking everyone for coming here today, for playing a role in an affair that's going on all over the world. Hopefully some day we mightn't have to have this event and we will celebrate that we have eradicated poverty.

For the rest of it, I hope you enjoy the stories you're going to hear, the music you're going to listen to and I'll see ye all next year when maybe we'll see some dent made in eradicating poverty in this world.



## Paul Uzel – Welcoming Address to the President of Ireland



On behalf of all of us here today, gathered on this very special day, I'm delighted to be given this opportunity to welcome you, Mister President, Because of Joseph Wresinski's vision, 30 years ago, around this Stone, we can speak as equals on a level field.

I'm returning to this podium, at the very place where I spoke twice about my struggles and my hopes to make changes in my life. This is a place where I got a lot of energy.

I'm honoured to welcome you, Mister President, as well as our friends who are going to speak. Together we form threads of a tapestry of life, and together gathered here, we can create a better picture. Yes, this picture can be better, because our past should not dictate our future.

As we grow together and form stronger communities, we will be in a better position to carry all of us and Leave No One Behind! Because of our common human experiences, you are in a good position Mister President to best understand us. You are also in the best position to relay our message to society as a whole.

Like many of us, you too are returning to this place to mark the 17 October. 15 years ago you spoke at the Famine Statues, as this Stone was not yet laid. Your return to this spot today warms our hearts and gives us strength. As do your words, and I'm quoting: **«Development is the possibility of flourishing in one's community and culture and the possibility to access to the means to do so.»**

Today, Mister President,  
we are together to bear witness  
to our will, to our fight,  
to our perseverance and to our spirit.  
It is what Joseph Wresinski  
dreamt of in 1987 and what is now  
flourishing from this Stone.

From this very spot, and I ask all of you to  
please listen to me as I'm quoting  
Wresinski, we will bear witness to  
**"children, women and men,  
who do not want to condemn,  
but to love, to pray, to work,  
and to unite,  
so that a world of solidarity  
may be born.  
A world, our world, in which all people  
would have given the best of themselves  
before dying.  
We will bear witness to them, to us,  
so that humanity may at last  
fulfil its true destiny,  
refusing forever that misery prevail."**

Shortly we will hear our five testimonies.  
These testimonies tell something  
about our anger in front of injustice,

they are also showing our courage,  
our experience  
which has given us strength  
and our hopes for the future.  
For us it is so important that you,  
the President of Ireland,  
you will now take time to listen.  
We know you will take home our words,  
and these words may play a part  
in your future and ours.

I have this image in my head.  
Our shoes are together here today,  
close to the stone.  
Tomorrow our shoes will be  
in different places,  
where justice has to be built.  
Your shoes and our shoes  
will carry a message.  
In your listening to our message, today,  
more people in society may listen to it,  
tomorrow.

Thank you, Mister President  
for your presence,  
and be sure we also look forward  
to listening to you.

## Debbie – from the East Wall community in Dublin

Good morning, my name is Debbie and I live in East Wall.

I would like to tell you a bit of my story. I was a single mother of two disabled children, Amy and Daniel. I was renting accommodation and was offered a council house. All my time was spent going up and down to Temple Street Hospital where my son Daniel was very ill. Unfortunately on January 15th 2002 Daniel died.

I was lost and went into myself and didn't know what to do. After a few weeks, I gave myself a kick in the backside as my daughter Amy needed me. At that time she was six years of age. I heard there was work going in the North Wall Women's Centre and I got a job and some training there. For three years I worked as a crèche assistant. I continued naturally to have good days and bad days. Then I went to work as a carer for the elderly, but found it extremely hard to hold down a job, as I needed to spend every hour looking after Amy. I needed to be at home when she got in from the school and the training centre.

I helped Amy to walk and to talk, to feed and to toilet. Believe me, though she is now twenty, I'm still doing these things for Amy. Luckily, she was in St Michael's House until she was eighteen years of age and at the moment she is in a training centre in Coolock. I'm dreading when she has to leave that centre.

**The advice I have for any parent of a disabled child is, never give up ... keep fighting for your child. It has been a constant battle.** I had to fight to get her a new wheelchair. It took months to get her a medical card, which was just for a twelve month period. To get Amy a place in the Training Centre was a hard struggle. Recently transport to the training centre for Amy was cut and Amy cannot be put on a bus without an escort, so I bring her to the centre daily. Right now I need a home with a bedroom downstairs, as Amy cannot climb upstairs. It is a never ending struggle. What keeps me at my best and on my toes is Amy ... caring for her and enjoying her love. I know this love will keep me going until the end of my days. Of course, I still have good days and bad days. After ten years of being alone as a mother, I met my partner and he has made a very big difference to my life and to that of Amy. I am grateful to the family and friends I have around me. Another thing that really helped me to value myself, was that about twelve years ago, I wrote my story, and had it published in a book.

I look around and see parents out there who are much worse off than me, and I never feel sorry for myself and I never ask 'why me?' Actually I feel very lucky to have Amy in my life.

**Thank you for listening to some of my story and remember never give up ... keep fighting for your child and for everyone struggling with poverty.**



## i-Smile International Mini-Drama



**LADY FACING AUDIENCE:**  
TIED DOWN BY VIOLENCE  
POVERTY HAS MADE ME WORTHLESS  
I CRIED OUT IN THE STREET BUT ALL I GOT WAS SILENCE  
IS THERE ANYTHING OUT THERE THAT CAN BE MY FORTRESS?

**BACKGROUND VOICE:**  
YES!!!  
YES THERE IS!!!  
WHAT YOU NEED IS A GREAT IDEA  
AND WITH YOUR TALENT YOU CAN MAKE IT PROGRESS  
AND WITH TECHNOLOGY YOU CAN SELL IT ANYWHERE  
AND WITH EDUCATION YOU WILL GAIN BACK YOUR CONFIDENCE  
YES!!!

**LADY FACING AUDIENCE**  
YES I CAN MAKE IT  
YES I CAN BREAK BOUNDARIES  
YES I CAN REACH FURTHER THAN THE LIMITS  
YES I CAN STAND OVER POVERTY  
YES I CAN  
YES!!!

## Kathleena, Emma and Paul – Focus Ireland, Dublin

### Paul

Good morning, we're delighted to be here with you today to mark the UN Day for the Eradication of Poverty and to tell you a little bit about our experiences.

I'm Paul and this is Emma and Kathleena and for the past year we've been volunteering with Focus Ireland as peer researchers. A peer researcher is someone who has experience of a particular issue – in our case homelessness - and who, with training and guidance, can become a researcher in that area, giving a different point of view and understanding to both the way the research is carried out and the reports that are produced.

In late 2015, we were offered an opportunity to become peer researchers for a European research project led by Dr Mary Murphy of Maynooth University. This project is called **Re-Invest**.

**Re-Invest** is focused on how ordinary people's housing, work, health and community were affected by the recent economic recession and on what governments can do differently to prevent the same thing happening again. While we learned a lot about the effect of the recession, we also learned a lot about each other - as a research team we learned that we all have different strengths but work best when we work together. We learned that, like our society – it's hard on your own and a crisis can overwhelm you, but when you work together to address a crisis you can hold steady and overcome it.

### Emma

We all took part in a series of research training sessions to help us to understand what questions we needed to ask, how we could best get the answers from participants and how we should record the information. Importantly, we also looked at how the questions we were asking might affect people as they might bring up difficult issues for them. Dr Mary Murphy, who is also a human rights commissioner with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, worked alongside us, meeting people from Focus Ireland projects in Dublin, Waterford, Limerick and Cork. We visited each project twice to make sure we really understood the participant's views and experiences. In July participants also joined us for meetings with politicians and policy makers in Cork for a discussion on the findings and this helped to ensure that they felt part of the research.

### Kathleena

So what did we find?

Through this research we found that the same issues came up for people no matter where they lived, their age or their gender: homelessness, family breakdown and a negative impact on participant's mental health. The problems were made worse by government cuts to social welfare, rent allowance, child welfare, medical cards and a whole range of community services. Here are some quotes from the people that we spoke to from all over the country:

### Paul

"Last year they took a lot of people off disability allowance, just like that, and it was very hard for all of those people. What I would fear for myself is that they can do that again. They can leave people in the lurch and I would be like 'Crap, what can I do now?'" Pat, Limerick

**Emma**

“The prescription charges, it’s just scandalous what they are charging now. I was supposed to be taking medication for epilepsy and now I don’t.” Paul, Dublin

**Kathleena**

“You would be lucky to get ten minutes with the psychiatrist. You would see a different one every time, there was no consistency. I just felt like a zombie.” Johnny, Cork

**Paul**

“The crisis, it made me worse, it made me suicidal. I didn’t want to live anymore. I found myself homeless. I couldn’t understand how this happened to me. I didn’t see it coming...it came.” Shawn, Limerick



**Emma**

“I’ll be telling lies to the people I rent off, you are allowed €375 a month but my rent is €425 so I have to be telling lies, everyone does it.” Fiona, Waterford

**Kathleena**

“You will see people spending much more time at home and see people literally walking the streets aimlessly with nothing to do and nowhere to go. One day there was a proper altercation outside my home with shouting and screaming and it made me pretty nervous. I don’t know if the Garda came, I was too scared to look outside the window.” John, Dublin

Here are the policy recommendations that are coming from the research and that echo what we are discussing here today at the UN Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

- **Housing:**  
Increase social housing stock  
Increase specialist housing services for people with disabilities and older people
- **Health**  
Improve access to medical cards  
Decrease waiting lists for mental and general health services
- **Social Welfare**  
Provide income security  
Improve rates for under-25s
- **Employment**  
Create more employment options for those on Disability Allowance  
Improve conditions for job schemes

**Emma**

So what’s next? In June we brought the recommendations from the report to the Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness and these recommendations formed part of the government’s recent Housing Action Plan. We’re waiting to see how that plan is put into action.

Last month we met with the other EU participants working on the Re-Invest Project to discuss the findings from each country. We’ll continue to work with Maynooth University to write up recommendations for national and EU policy makers and influencers.

And finally we’re just about to start work as Focus Ireland staff members to gather the views of people using the services to see what their recommendations are in making it the best service possible.

**We’ll come back next year and let you know the results!**

## Mihaita – Student at O'Connell's School, Dublin 1



Good morning, My name is Mihaita,

I am from Romania and I'm glad to be here today to speak to you all.

I am here in Ireland with both of my parents, who are working and my younger brother Gabriel, who is aged 7.

When we came to Ireland none of us spoke any English, it was very difficult. This is our third year in Ireland. We have moved three times in total. We have gone from homeless to three emergency accommodations in Dublin city. At present we have been in our current accommodation for 6 months.

At present I live in Dublin 8, South Circular Road and I attend O'Connell's Secondary school on the North Circular Road, Dublin 1. At present I am due to sit 8 subjects at HL in my upcoming J.C. I have to travel to school by bus as I have to bring my younger brother to OCS primary school as he is aged 7. I'm unable to carry him on the bicycle. It is my responsibility to ensure my brother gets to school as both of my parents are working.

So what is it like to live in emergency accommodation I hear you ask?

Thankfully I'm not homeless, I experienced that for two weeks when I came to Ireland at first; getting a bed at night and then being put out on the street again at 9am in the morning. This wasn't easy as you can imagine- never knowing day-to-day where you would sleep.

Emergency accommodation is as follows:

There are 6 families in the house I live in; 23 people in all.

There are 9 bedrooms, 6 with families and 3 with single beds.

All 23 people share the same kitchen for cooking.

All 23 people share the same living room and dining room.

All 23 people have to cook and eat at different times.

All 23 people share the washing machine, the drier, the microwave and the same TV (there is no dishwasher).

My family and I live in one of the 6 family bedrooms. The room has a single bed and a double bed with a bunk on top. The size of the room is 18'x18'. In the room there is a fridge, a wardrobe, a shower and toilet.

There is no table to study at. Personally I have no private space; I have no room to relax. There is no place to invite friends and there is definitely no place for a sleepover. Management must be informed in advance if there is a visitor to call. Visitors can only come between 8am to 8pm. Management must be informed if a person is staying away for the night. These rules apply to all people living in the house.

Emergency accommodation is much better than homelessness and far better than life in Romania. Thankfully both my parents are with me and working- they are both on minimum wage.

Thank you for coming and listening to me and my story here today. I hope that after listening to my personal experience the homelessness and emergency accommodation situation will improve in Ireland. After all, everyone deserves a safe and secure place to call home.

## Stacey, Paula, Ciaran and Philip – SAOL, NWICTDP and ATD Dublin

### Stacey:

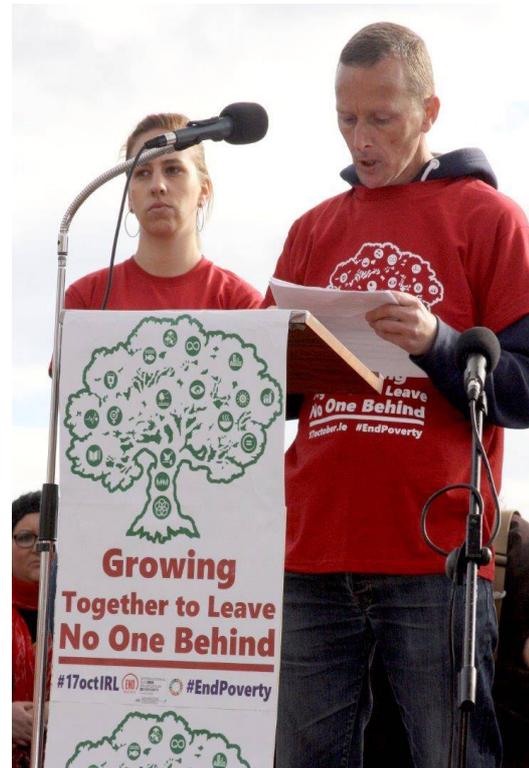
Hello everyone, my name is Stacey and I am here with Paula, Ciaran and Philip. We are involved in the "Our Voice" project. With other women and men from the SAOL project, the North West Inner City Training and Development Project, The Clondalkin Traveller Development Primary Care Group, Pavee Point and ATD – All Together in Dignity. We are discussing issues from our lives with people in Poland and Spain. Both here and there we face hardship. Here and there we struggle. One question we discuss is this one: Is the European Union helping us to deal with our health issues? Next year, in June we will be able to tell you what we have learned and share our ideas to improve the situation.



**Ciaran:**

The first thing we want to tell you today is that we feel many of us are condemned to an early death sentence and this has to stop.

This very day, four weeks ago Jason, our friend who was involved with us in this project, took his own life. I think that it is poverty, exclusion and the fact of being unheard that was also responsible for taking his life. In July this year, we started to discuss about the rights we should have to make sure we have good health and good health care. Jason's first response to this was : 'to be entitled to my own say, to able to say what I have to say and not remain unheard.'



I would now ask you to share a **minute's silence** to remember Jason, and other people in this city, in Ireland and across the world who have died too early.

**Minute of Silence**

**Stacey:**

In the discussion we have in the "Our Voices" project, we agree that there is still a lack of education and awareness programmes within our schools around health - especially addiction and mental health. Louise told us "If I had gotten the right information on the effects of drugs and the damage they could do to your life, maybe I wouldn't have turned to drugs. There were no advertisements on bus stops or ads on TV that warned me of the outcomes of substance misuse. My body is damaged to the point of being at death's door."

The lack of education exists also among people working in Health Services. Are they being trained to better understand the trauma people in poverty are going through? We even meet doctors who don't seem to know much about certain diseases, for example Hepatitis C.

A health issue that Louise is passionate about is mental health. There are so many issues for people in addiction or recovery who have mental illnesses that we would ask any and every politician and civil servant here to join us in the debate about a quality health service for all who have dual diagnosis issues.

**Philip:**

Living in poverty can be stressful and you get excluded at an early age. Over the years, many of us here would have been in and out of prison. We know well the barriers in trying to access funding to return to education. Some of us struggle to pay for a course that we really feel passionate about. Education is central for everyone to move out of poverty and to move forward. Women with kids who are trying to get back to education struggle with child care and other costs. For those on Community Schemes, to give 20 euros extra a week to pay for childcare, travel and lunches is really not enough. There will, of course, be changes in policies, but many more changes are needed when thinking of families living under the poverty line.

**Paula:**

We as mothers have enough to deal with on a daily basis, like making sure our kids are clean, in school, and have food on the table! But more and more mothers don't have a table to put the food on because they don't have homes. I'm currently living in a small hotel room where there is myself, my partner and 3 boys aged 2, 3, and 14. Now what 14 year old boy wants to share a room with his own mother, her partner and two small children? My son is at an age where he should have some sense of privacy when he goes to bed but with the way we are living at the moment that's a luxury I can't afford him, so most of the time he stays with my mum.

I know people might say all they need is enough love and care. My children get that in abundance. And I thought I was handling this really well until I tried to cook potatoes in my microwave for my kids. They turned out great so I mashed them and tried to soften them with milk, the milk turned sour as soon as it hit the hot potatoes as it had been there since the night before- I'm in a hotel I don't have a fridge. So this made me fall apart and cry my eyes out like a fool. Before anyone thinks 'for fuck sake it's only potatoes', it had actually nothing to do with the potatoes, it was me realising that I live in poverty. I am in this hard stressful way of life and this means I cannot be the mother I am more than capable of being.

Yes my boys are loved, and no matter how I manage, they are fed, washed and have clean clothes every day. But it shouldn't be this hard! There are thousands of mothers in the same situation as myself, and that needs to change. Let's fight this together so myself and every other mother can finally get their own dignity.



## The President of Ireland - Michael D. Higgins

Táim thar a bheith sásta a bheith libh inniu ar an lá thábhachtach seo - lá ina thagann daoine le chéile, in áiteanna ar fud na cruinne, chun seasamh i ndlúthpháirtíocht le bhaill uile ár bpobal Domhanda atá ag fulaingt i mbochtanacht.

[I am very pleased to have the opportunity to join you all on this important day when people come together, in venues across the world, to stand in solidarity with all those members of our global community who live in poverty.]

Members of the Oireachtas and most of all those who made the testimonies which are the most important part of what is taking place here today. I know Hugh Frazer a very long time, it was shortly after poverty was discovered in Kilkenny in 1974 and we've been discussing it for a very long time since, sometimes we appear to be going around in circles because there is so much people should know by now.



I wanted in particular to hear these five testimonies and the first thing I want to say is I have no difficulty using whatever influence I may have in conveying them to those that I hope will respond as it is past time responding. This is a very important day around the world and for a long time before I became President I have been coming here indeed before we even had this stone. Sometimes the crowd has been very small, however the numbers today are very good, it is very important to see so many young people. It is very important that they do not see in their generation the failures that we have had in my generation and generations before me, that is that the capacity that exists in our work and everything we are doing to actually eliminate poverty, not just alleviate poverty. We have failed in that. When we hear reports of great global councils and gatherings of people discussing these affairs, this issue should always be there. This particular day is an important day to express solidarity throughout the world, the importance of dignity and giving real meaning to our words.

May I thank ATD Fourth World-Ireland for their invitation to address you on this commemoration today, and all of you for the very warm welcome you have extended to me here this morning. I am

very happy to have come and been able to take notes on the five testimonies that we have heard. 2016 is, of course, the centenary of the birth of Joseph Wresinski, the founder of ATD Fourth World. ATD, as you know, stands for 'All Together in Dignity' because across all the religions of the world and across all the beacons and all the human rights statements, the word dignity can occur. This is about simply seeing in the other person, not just yourself, but a person of immense uniqueness that is entitled to respect. While the term Fourth World is typically used to indicate and describe the most poverty stricken and economically troubled regions of nations within the Third World, nations often excluded from society. The purpose of ATD Fourth World is, therefore, to stand together in dignity with some of the most excluded people in the world. Founded by Fr Joseph Wresinski when he was sent as chaplain to 250 families placed in an emergency housing camp in Noisy-le-Grand, near Paris its foundations are truly rooted in a spirit of solidarity and collectivism. His words:

"The families in that camp have inspired everything I have undertaken for their liberation. They took hold of me, they lived within me, they carried me forward, they pushed me to found the Movement with them"

Here in 2016, as people speak to the people on the street who are homeless, very often what they actually say at the end of a conversation is 'Thank you for speaking to me'. Of allowing them the dignity rather than anything else that they are entitled to as a human being. The words of Wresinski speak movingly of the great unity and commonality which saw an initiative that started as the distribution of food and old clothes to the poor, become an organisation that works in partnership with communities across the world to end the exclusion and injustice of persistent poverty. Joseph Wresinski was a man whose compassion, vision and great spirit of humanity should continue to inspire us today. But I believe myself as well that it goes far beyond compassion and far beyond reason, all of the capacities, morally, intellectually, practically in policy terms, enable us, if the demand is made, and if people with generosity agree among each other, that to eliminate poverty, to decide that that the elimination of poverty is that to which economic structures, fiscal structures, financial structures must adjust themselves so that it takes precedent over every other issue. That it is regarded, it's cohesion that it makes possible. It enables us to provide the only guaranteed security that can cross planets and can cross conflicts. I think today, as all of us do, all of you who have been telling these wonderful stories of yourself with courage, and it takes courage to do so. Is there anyone here present who does not think of the children and the suffering people in Aleppo, those who have been forced from their homes, the 63 million who are scattered across the planet and who are vulnerable.

Wresinski grew up in poverty and experienced, at first hand, the exclusion, marginalisation and daily humiliation, the *nâire*, that goes hand in hand with a life lived below the bread line. He was a man acutely aware, not only of the great physical deprivations suffered by those who are poor and vulnerable, but also of the grinding everyday demoralisation and disempowerment which permeates the lives of the impoverished and disadvantaged in our communities.

Today marks the thirtieth occasion on which people have gathered around the world to observe the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Today also marks the first gathering to take place in the time-frame of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2016-2030) which has as its first goal: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere. As President I have spoken before of how critical it is that we look beyond the aim of alleviating poverty, even beyond eliminating extreme poverty; of the importance of broadening these aims and seeking to eliminate poverty in all its forms and to address issues such as needless and avoidable early mortality and morbidity, the elimination of diseases, and the many other factors which so impoverish the lives of citizens across the world.

John Weeks, in his *The Economics of the 1%* has offered, as an appropriate definition of economics: 'the study of the causes of the underutilisation of resources in a market society, and the policies to eliminate that resource waste for the general welfare'.

It is a definition which calls on us to seek out and come to understand the sources of societal inequalities, if we are truly work for the eradication of poverty across the globe.



The new Sustainable Development Goals recognise the need for a redefinition of the very notion of "development". They signify an invitation to a crucial advance in multilateral diplomacy, in their being universal, in their applying to all countries, and no longer primarily to those labelled 'developing' or 'poor'. The new 2030 Agenda provides a comprehensive blueprint for an integrated continuum of action at international and national levels, stretching from the necessary response to emergency situations in the short term, to the need to empower vulnerable communities in the long-term. If we are to eliminate global hunger we must not simply seek to respond to immediate needs, but must meet the obligation that is involved in creating the capacity, in different circumstances and cultures, of our fellow global citizens in achieving food sufficiency. There is a clear distinction between an immediate response to famine and hunger that provides essential food, even nutrition, and the creation, or protection, of the capacity to produce food. What is required is a holistic approach to issues of famine, global hunger, poverty, nutrition and food production. It is appropriate therefore that, during this important year, the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty has asked us to focus on the theme of "Moving from humiliation and exclusion to participation: Ending poverty in all its forms".

Every day, around the world, human beings living in poverty are denied the basic human dignities that so many of us take for granted. Basic livelihoods are casually removed by government brokered land deals with large international corporations; women are economically marginalised or denied the education that is key to their empowerment; entire groups are neglected or discriminated against based on their ethnicity or religious beliefs.



A denial of basic human rights to those who live below the poverty line is not, of course, limited to any particular part of the world. Even in countries with developed economies and advanced technological infrastructures there are those who are left behind; discriminated against, isolated, insulted, stereotyped, and made objects of condescension by fellow members of society who, deliberately or unthinkingly, dehumanise and further impoverish the lives of those struggling with chronic poverty. Let us also not forget the many ways in which societies create a culture of dependency forgetting that truly effective compassion means striving for human flourishing and seeking the conditions that make it possible.

Poverty is, and always has been, a multidimensional problem. It is a complex issue to define. However, the ways in which we define poverty are critical to how we structure political, policy and academic discourse and the fuller debate on both its definition or impact and the challenges we face in eradicating poverty from our societies. Those who live in poverty speak of the isolation, shame, and humiliation they perceive as having been inflicted on them by society and of how such treatment as they experience is a key factor in their lived experiences of suffering. Until recently, however, intrinsic human emotions such as lowered or damaged self-esteem have been the missing dimensions in poverty analysis and research. But such dimensions are an essential part of the analysis if we are to understand the different types and intensities of poverty that impact on wellbeing and quality of life, their many layers and dimensions, and how they interact and interconnect, and look for explanations and effective solutions.

The introduction of a Global Multidimensional Poverty Index in 2010 was a welcome development, allowing for the measurement of the non-monetary deprivations which, combined with lack of economic capacity, define chronic poverty in over one hundred developing countries across the

world. Such non-monetary indicators have also been increasingly used in individual European countries, as well as at European Union level, in measuring poverty and exclusion -allowing for a greater understanding of the stark realities of the experience of poverty and the many ways in which it can diminish and limit the lives of its sufferers. Despite the development of more comprehensive indicators of poverty, many in society continue to view poverty as a one dimensional problem which can be measured in purely monetary terms. Today, however, we are asked to remember its multi-dimensional nature; to look closely into the deep and quiet corners of those lives deprived of a right to participate at all levels of society, and to reflect on the long inter-generational shadows consistent poverty can throw across individual families.

Historically, societies have often been condemnatory of those in poverty and at times they have branded or punished poor people as idle, criminal or disruptive. People living in poverty were subjected to abuses of power and to policies that deprived them of their autonomy; were categorised as undeserving; and were often segregated from society and banished to workhouses or other institutions designed to morally remedy the sin of being poor.

It is both disheartening and worrying to realise that in Ireland, as in so many other parts of the world, shame continues to be one of the most consistently reported characteristics amongst people experiencing poverty. It is a feeling reinforced daily in a society where the spoken and unspoken attitudes of fellow citizens so often fall short of the common humanity that is a critical component of a truly functioning society. Professor Robert Walker, in his book *The Shame of Poverty*, wrote that:

"If a society creates the illusion of meritocracy – that you get what you deserve, that the harder you work, the richer and more valuable to society you become, it suggests that the opposite is also true – that it is shameful to be poor, and that poverty is self-inflicted."

We are, it would seem, living in a time when the increasing spread of extreme individualism has led to the erroneous fiction that poverty is a sign of a personal failure, that it has somehow been 'deserved'. However, poverty and its associated suffering is never deserved.

Here in Ireland people with disabilities experience high levels of consistent poverty and are twice as likely to live below the poverty line as the rest of the population; almost one in five children live in households with incomes below the poverty line; 18% of adults living in poverty are in some form of employment, while more than 57% of those in poverty are retired, students, people in caring roles, people who are ill or people with a disability.



Behind those statistics are, of course, many personal stories of misfortune, unemployment, mistakes, regret, lost opportunity and sometimes abuse, neglect, addiction or illness. These are human stories; the stories of our fellow citizens who have, through circumstance, found themselves living in insecure and difficult situations. There can be no doubt that how a society treats its more vulnerable citizens, how it deals with helping people into work and protecting those unable to work, is a critical reflection of its moral core. A society that creates a culture of suspicion or hostility towards those living below the poverty line; or that patronises and infantilises them; or that fails to view its citizens living in poverty as individual people with individual problems, preferring to dismiss them as homogenous members of an inadequate underclass, cannot easily lay claim to being part of a functioning democracy.

Earlier we listened to testimonies describing the different dimensions and experiences of poverty in Ireland. Those who gave those testimonies come here today as representatives of the seven hundred and fifty thousand people in Ireland who live in poverty, lacking the economic capacity to live lives defined as fit for humans within our society. Listening to those testimonies should be a stark reminder of the many ways our society can inflict, often through choosing not to know or care, unnecessary hurt or pain on fellow citizens who struggle every day with the challenges of poverty. They are testimonies permeated by great courage, willpower and a determination to improve the landscape for fellow citizens experiencing poverty. They are generous and brave testimonies delivered by citizens of whom we can be very proud indeed.

True citizenship must be based on equality and the accordance of equal value to every citizen, including a basic level of rights and participation. There can be no room, in such a vision of citizenship, for the prevention of full participation due to poverty and discrimination.

There are challenges too to our administrative systems. When people living in poverty are treated as numerical units or administrative cases; when they are forced to jump multiple and difficult hurdles in order to claim financial benefits to which they are entitled; too many occasions when they are required to navigate their way around overly complicated procedures and layers of red tape in order to avail of vital services, we insult and demean those amongst us who are guilty of nothing except living, day in day out, below the poverty line. When a citizen experiencing poverty is not enabled to exercise their voice, or to claim their rights and entitlements, not empowered to enter into informed dialogue about decisions which affect their lives, rendered unable to defend themselves or to assert their opinion or to speak up and object when they feel their rights are being violated or ignored, or obstructed from access to an education that would open up windows of opportunity, they have been failed by a society that claims to operate on the principles of a democratic republic. When strangers who arrive on our shores in need or difficulty are left in the uncertain limbo of direct provision for anything up to ten years; when homeless families are forced to live in one hotel room devoid of cooking facilities, and subjected to a dehumanising set of rules and conditions; when others without a roof over their head are condemned to wander the streets by day, and desperately seek space in homeless shelters by night, we as a nation are failing to display the necessary spirit of humanity on which a democracy should be built.

On this important day, when we come together in solidarity with the poor across the world, let us consider how we treat those amongst us who are in difficulty or in need. Let us pledge to strive to ensure that the common good will always be placed above narrow interests. Let us also consider the many ways in which we can enable those living in poverty to make that life changing move from humiliation and exclusion to full participation in their society and their communities; a participation which will allow their voices to be heard and their possibilities to be realised. We must, as a nation, continue to strive to deepen our understanding of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, ensuring that our policies focus on all aspects of poverty, including the shame,

humiliation and social exclusion that so negatively impacts on the human dignity of citizens living in poverty.

**Mar shaoránaigh de Dhomhain ina mbraithimid uile ar a chéile, caithfimid glacadh lenár ndualgaisí guth a thabhairt do na prionsabail sin ar mhór linn a fheiceáil i gceartlár ár dtoghchaí le chéile, agus gníomh a dhéanamh chun an fíis sin a bhaint amach.**

**[We must also, as citizens of an interdependent world accept our obligations and duties to join forces across the globe in voicing and actioning the values we wish to see placed at the heart of our collective and global future.]**

In conclusion, may I thank you sincerely for inviting me to attend this commemoration, to hear your enlightening stories and experiences, and to join you in expressing friendship and solidarity with people who live with poverty and social exclusion every day of the year in Dublin, in Ireland, in Europe and around the world.

**Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.**



## Love Rescue Me – The High Hopes Choir

**Love rescue me**  
Come forth and speak to me  
Raise me up and don't let me fall  
No man is my enemy  
My own hands imprison me  
**Love rescue me**

Many strangers have I met  
On the road to my regret  
Many lost who seek to find  
themselves in me  
They ask me to reveal  
The very thoughts  
they would conceal

**Love rescue me**

And the sun in the sky  
Makes a shadow of you and I  
Stretching out as  
the sun sinks in the sea  
I'm here without a name  
In the palace of my shame  
**Said, love rescue me**

In the cold mirror of a glass  
I see my reflection pass  
See the dark shades  
of what I used to be  
See the purple of her eyes  
The scarlet of my lies  
**Love rescue me**

Yea, though I walk  
In the valley of shadow  
Yea, I will fear no evil  
I have cursed thy rod and staff  
They no longer comfort me  
**Love rescue me**

*Sha la la, sha la la la*  
*Sha la la la, ha la la*  
*Sha la la la, sha la la la*  
*Sha la la la, sha la la*  
*Sha la la la, sha la la la*  
*Sha la la*

**I said love, love rescue me**

I said love  
Climb up the mountains,  
said love I said love, oh my love  
On the hill of the son  
I'm on the eve of a storm  
And my word you must believe in  
I said love, rescue me  
Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah

Yeah I'm here without a name  
In the palace of my shame  
**I said love rescue me**

I've conquered my past  
The future is here at last  
I stand at the entrance  
To a new world I can see  
The ruins to the right of me  
Will soon have lost sight of me  
**Love rescue me**





## Ireland's Call – The High Hopes Choir

### **Side by side,**

we stand like brothers  
One for all and all together  
We will stay united  
through darker days  
And we'll be unbeatable forever

### **Ireland, Ireland,**

Together standing tall  
Shoulder to shoulder  
We'll answer  
Ireland's call

Come the day  
and come the hour  
Some will live in song  
and story

We were born to follow our guiding star  
And to meet our destiny with glory

### **Ireland, Ireland,**

Together standing tall  
Shoulder to shoulder

We'll answer  
Ireland's call

Hearts of steel  
and heads unbowing  
Vowing never  
to be broken

We will fight until  
we can fight no more  
Till our final requiem  
is spoken

### **Ireland, Ireland,**

Together standing tall  
Shoulder to shoulder  
We'll answer  
Ireland's call

### **Ireland, Ireland,**

**Together standing tall**  
**Shoulder to shoulder**  
We'll answer Ireland's call  
We'll answer Ireland's call



**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**  
**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY**  
**17 October 2016**

We are approaching the end of the first year of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda is a universal vision for peace, prosperity and dignity for all people on a healthy planet. Achieving this objective is inconceivable without fulfilling the mandate of SDG 1 to end poverty in all its forms.

Today, some 1 billion people live in extreme poverty and more than 800 million endure hunger and malnutrition. But poverty is not simply measured by inadequate income. It is manifested in restricted access to health, education and other essential services and, too often, by the denial or abuse of other fundamental human rights.

Poverty is both a cause and consequence of marginalization and social exclusion. To fulfil the promise of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind, we must address the humiliation and exclusion of people living in poverty.

Humiliation and exclusion are powerful drivers of social unrest and, in extreme cases, the violent extremism that is troubling so many parts of our world. But, in most instances, people living in poverty respond to these societal ills with stoic resilience as they work to escape the degrading reality of their daily lives.

The duty of all Governments and societies is to address systemic socio-economic inequalities and facilitate the engagement of all people living in extreme poverty so they can help themselves, their families and their communities to build a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous future for all.

The message of today's observance is "Moving from Humiliation and Exclusion to Participation: Ending Poverty in All its Forms". We must break down the walls of poverty and exclusion that plague so many people in every region of the world. We must build inclusive societies that promote participation by all. We must ensure the voices of all those living in poverty are heard.

On this International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, let us listen to and heed the voices of people living in poverty. Let us commit to respect and defend the human rights of all people and end the humiliation and social exclusion that people living in poverty face every day by promoting their involvement in global efforts to end extreme poverty once and for all.



# Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals are at the heart of the End Poverty Day message



Guiding Principles on  
Extreme Poverty  
and Human Rights



In September 2012, the UN Human Rights Council adopted the Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights. They provide **global policy guidelines focusing specifically on the human rights of people living in poverty**. It is the first internationally agreed text to stress **the central message of the UN Day on 17 October**: extreme poverty exists in every country in the world, and it is both a cause and a consequence of multiple human rights violations.

On 25 September 2015, after crucial work by the Irish Ambassador at the UN, world leaders have agreed to **17 Global Goals** to achieve major transformations in the next 15 years: **end extreme poverty, fight inequalities and injustices, limit climate change and protect the planet**. The historic 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development can make all this possible in all countries and for all people.



This booklet has been printed by the **Irish 17 October Committee ([www.17october.ie](http://www.17october.ie))** with the support of the Department of Social Protection under the United Nations International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2016 Public Awareness Initiative. Follow us at **@17octcomIRL**

*The views expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Social Protection*

An Roinn Coimisce Sóisialaí  
Department of Social Protection  
[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

