



20 Special Initiatives within the First 20 Weeks of Becoming President

When I announced my campaign to run for President of Ireland, I committed to being a President of actions rather than promises. The People of Ireland deserve to know the commitments on which they can measure the performance of their President. In the interests of transparency and accountability, I have set out 20 key initiatives that I will commence within the first 20 weeks of my Presidency if honoured to be elected.

These commitments are based on my values of respect, responsibility, community, trust and inclusivity. I look forward to discussing these commitments with the Irish people over the remainder of this election and to putting them at the heart of my Presidency as we shape our future together.

Seán Gallagher

Wednesday 17th October 2018

Initiative	My Approach	Timeline
'Promoting Ability'	<p>I want to work to change the perception of people with disabilities. If elected, I will launch 'Promoting Ability', a year-long initiative in the area of Disability. The initiative will be launched on 3rd December 2018, to coincide with International Day of Persons with Disabilities. It will focus on the almost 900,000 people across the island of Ireland with a disability, their carers and their families. We will nurture their uniqueness, promote opportunities for inclusivity and employment and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.</p> <p>In addition, a diverse workplace benefits us all. To increase opportunities, I will host a Work to Learn Programme in Áras an Uachtaráin for those with intellectual disabilities. This follows the successful Work to Learn initiative which is currently taking place in the Oireachtas.</p>	The initiative will be launched on 3rd December 2018, to coincide with International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
Learn with the President - Foghlaim Leis an Uachtarán	Since the foundation of the State, the Irish language has been a huge part of who we are and our unique identity. I take pride in the status of the Irish language and am committed to furthering my proficiency as President. In doing so, I want to invite every citizen, regardless of nationality or proficiency level, to join me on a learning journey, 'Foghlaim Leis an Uachtarán', so we can spread the growth of the Irish language together.	Seachtain na Gaeilge in March 2019

<p>Celebrating the work of the Defence Forces</p>	<p>Since the foundation of the state, a tradition of selfless service to our country has been established in our Defence Forces. It is this tradition that has garnered 60 years of unbroken service to the UN and allowed our troops to help so many communities realise the hope of a better day. In my Constitutional role as Commander-in-Chief, my first international visit as President, if feasible, will involve a visit to our peacekeepers in one of the countries where they have been deployed. The purpose of this visit will be to recognise their role in making Ireland a beacon of light for peace and justice in the world. In representing Ireland in the world, I will promote human rights, respect, and peace, knowing the sacrifices that our Defence Forces, their partners and families make every day so that others may know the meaning of these values.</p>	<p>First overseas visit as scheduled post Inauguration</p>
<p>Run with the President Initiative</p>	<p>I am passionate about health and wellness because I believe that being active is key to our happiness, health and mental well being. I want to encourage all citizens to get active and promote healthy living no matter their ability. This is why, if elected, I will host a monthly event where everyone, regardless of fitness level, can join the President for a walk or run in the Phoenix Park. By doing this, we stay active, stay healthy and stay connected on the issues that matter most to you.</p>	<p>Launching Last weekend in December 2018</p>
<p>Promoting Transparency in Office</p>	<p>In the interests of transparency which befits the office of President, I will file a SIPO annual declaration in January 2019, to detail the same as what is produced by every other member of the Oireachtas. I intend to continue this for every year thereafter while in office. In addition, on commencing my term I would formally request that the government extend Freedom of Information requests to the Office of President and carry out an annual audit of all expenditure.</p>	<p>November 11th 2018</p>

A Green Áras an Uachtaráin	<p>I believe that we have a responsibility to leave our planet better than we found it. The effects of climate change can be seen in our hotter summers and severe winters. I believe that the Office of President should lead by example which is why I will commit to making Áras an Uachtaráin carbon-neutral by 2021, included in this, is a commitment to bring an end to single use plastic within the Áras.</p>	<p>This will be communicated to all areas on the date of inauguration and be operational by Earth Day, April 22nd 2019</p>
Programme to Celebrate Culture & the Arts	<p>I will expand on the successful '<i>Glaoch - The President's Call</i>' programme which was introduced in 2013. This programme brought together artists from across the spectrum and in addition, celebrates key achievements of Irish diaspora involved in arts across the world. I believe this can be expanded further to strengthen the connection between the millions of Irish globally our cultural and artistic heritage which has given so much to our country and many others around the world.</p>	<p>This initiative will be launched during St Patrick's Festival, 14th-18th of March 2019</p>
Ireland & The World Symposium	<p>For a small island, our impact in the world has been immense. To continue this, I will work alongside the Government to host a symposium on Ireland's place in the world in the context of Brexit, Ireland within the EU and our International Relationships. This will coincide with my ongoing support of the Government and State Agencies on Trade Missions across the globe. I will use my own expertise to engage with target clients, influencers, investors and business advisors and promote Ireland as the gateway to Europe.</p>	<p>January 2019</p>

<p>President's Work Experience Initiative</p>	<p>My work experience at a young age taught me a great deal about work values, relationships and respect. I believe it is important that our young people have opportunities to gain work experience and also understand the role of the President. To facilitate this, I will launch two separate placement initiatives. The first will be open to 3rd level students with appropriate academic oversight from participating universities. The second will provide opportunities for Transition Year students to complete work placements in Áras an Uachtaráin with a view to opening up the office of the President to young people and increasing knowledge of the role of President.</p>	<p>This initiative will commence on January 1st 2019</p>
<p>Presidential Awards</p>	<p>I will introduce 9 Presidential Awards for Irish citizens who have contributed significantly to Irish society across a variety of sectors.</p> <p>Using the template of the existing Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad, each new award will be named after each former Irish President. The award category will reflect the role played by each former President – e.g. The Douglas Hyde Award will recognise contribution to the Irish language and the Mary McAleese Award will recognise contribution to peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland.</p> <p>Each award will be presented by the President every year. The Award is not an honours system and it doesn't give the recipients any legal entitlements or benefits.</p> <p>A High-Level Panel made up of representatives from within the appropriate Government Departments and appointed representatives will submit its recommendations to the Government for approval.</p>	<p>This initiative will be formally launched on 17th January 2019, the birthday of Ireland's first President Douglas Hyde.</p>

<p>Promoting Peace within Ireland and across the Globe</p>	<p>Áras an Uachtaráin hosts a Peace Bell commissioned and dedicated by the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese in 2008 on the Occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. Inscribed on the bell are the words “Let there be peace”.</p> <p>To continue the important work of building bridges through peace, every month I will invite cross community groups, north and south in addition to visiting international groups, to ring the peace bell in a short ceremony. In doing, so we can continue to celebrate difference and nurture inclusivity.</p>	<p>The first invited group will ring the Peace Bell in the first week of December</p>
<p>Equality in Action</p>	<p>Gender equality is a societal issue and requires action from us all. Therefore, I will request, in all new projects which I embark upon, that there is an inclusive environment, and that in as far as applicable, there will be full gender equality, this will include appointed roles to the Council of State.</p>	<p>Effective from date of Inauguration</p>
<p>Opening up Áras an Uachtaráin to the Public and the Media</p>	<p>I am committed to ensuring that the public have knowledge and scrutiny of Presidential activities. In addition to continuing to host events for the public, as President I will also host quarterly summits in Áras an Uachtaráin for local and national media to engage with the President and the activities of the office. In addition, I will also commit to doing an interview with every licensed regional radio station within the first year of my presidency and ensuring that there is access for print and online media publications.</p>	<p>World Radio Day- February 13th 2019</p>

Recognising the Role of Women in Public Life	<p>I am committed to launching a number of special initiatives to promote female participation across all areas of society. The first of these initiatives will focus on female participation in politics.</p> <p>2nd April 2019 will mark 100 years to the day Countess Markievicz was appointed our first female Minister. On this day, I will convene an all-island gathering of past and present female elected representatives to mark the contribution of Countess Markievicz and all female elected officials past and present who have continued her legacy over the last century.</p> <p>This event will also be an opportunity to celebrate the unique contributions of other female leaders from community organisations, activist groups and wider society who have impacted our country for the better. Most importantly, this summit at Áras an Uachtaráin will also bring together the next generation of female leaders and in doing so, we can be confident that our future is bright and truly representative of the nation we have become.</p>	Launching 8th of March 2019- International Women's Day
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Civic Engagement to mark the Anniversary of the meeting of the First Dáil & the Declaration of Independence	<p>The meeting of the First Dáil and the Declaration of Independence was a momentous occasion in Irish History. I would like to see the government ensure that each school will be provided with a copy of the Declaration of Independence, Faisnéise Neamhspleáchais, to commemorate the first meeting of Dáil Éireann which took place on the 21st of January 1919 in the Round Room of Dublin's Mansion House. In my role as President, I will commemorate this important occasion by hosting school and community groups in Áras an Uachtaráin to mark this occasion, in line with other state events organised to mark the importance historical milestone.</p>	<p>21st January 2019</p>
Community Engagement	<p>Communities are the backbone of our country and local democracy crucial our communities. As President, I am committed to visiting every local authority and to meet with the Public Participation Network in each local authority to understand and engage with issues and activities that are driving the communities in every corner of Ireland.</p>	<p>The first visit to a local authority will commence by March 2019.</p>
Young Person's APP (Advisory Panel to the President)	<p>Our young people are the lifeblood of our country and I believe they play a crucial role in shaping our future. This is why, as President, I will launch the Young Person' Advisory Panel to the President. This panel will represent a cross section of young people aged 12-17 to advise the President on engagement initiatives with young people across the island of Ireland.</p>	<p>This initiative will be launched in January with the panel in place by March 30th 2019</p>

<p>Providing a Platform for innovative, creative and artistic minds</p>	<p>Ireland is a country of creative, artistic and innovative minds who contribute to our society and our global impact. To acknowledge this, I intend to host a series of engagement discussions and events at Áras an Uachtaráin to celebrate the creativity of people across the island. These programmes will host innovator,s artists and creators from organisations such as Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Coder Dojo, the Arts Council and business groups. Hosting such organisations in Áras an Uachtaráin serves as an opportunity to promote and nurture innovative, creative and artistic minds.</p>	<p>The first engagement at Áras an Uachtaráin will be held in December 2018</p>
<p>Commencing the Citizens Welcome</p>	<p>In the spirit of recognising new citizens and the diversity of our country, I will introduce a new personalised letter from the President to each new citizen as part of the citizenship ceremony. This letter will remind each new Irish citizen that a former President Erskine Childers had himself become a naturalised Irish citizen and went on to become President. In doing this, I want all new citizens to our country to know their contribution is valued and they are part of our proud history and our shared future.</p>	<p>Effective from date of inauguration</p>
<p>Annual Symposium: Our Land, Our Shores, Our Future</p>	<p>The agriculture, agri-food and maritime sector encompasses everything from primary agriculture to food and beverage production, from fisheries and fish processing to forestry and forestry outputs. If elected I will host an annual symposium recognising the agriculture, agri-food and maritime sector to recognise their important role and the importance of these communities in our country.</p>	<p>March 2019</p>