

**OLLSCOIL na hÉIREANN  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND**

TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY:

**PROFESSOR JOHN O'HALLORAN**, Deputy President and Registrar,  
University College Cork on 9 October 2019 in the Royal College of  
Physicians in Ireland, on the occasion of the conferring of the Degree of  
Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, on **DAVID DONOGHUE**

A Sheansailéir, a mhuintir na hOllscoile agus a dhaoine uaisle,

It is my pleasure and privilege to introduce to you today David Donoghue, one of Ireland's foremost public servants, diplomat, promoter of peace, justice and international development.

David, we recognise and honour you today for a lifetime of selfless work as a public servant and diplomat dedicated to promoting peace on this island and sustainable and equitable development globally. We honour your exceptional contribution as co-chair, with the Ambassador of Kenya, of the negotiations at the United Nations which culminated in adoption of the ground-breaking 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, at the UN General Assembly in September 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals provide the main roadmap for global action to address the major global challenges of poverty, climate change, food insecurity, conflict, equality, health and other fundamental societal issues. Reaching such an agreement, signed by 193 countries, is a testament to your exceptional negotiation and facilitation skills.

I am aware that you were born in Dublin in 1952 into a family with strong academic roots: your father was Professor of English Literature in University College Dublin and you, as well as many other family members, studied at UCD, where you pursued a degree in Modern Languages. You taught briefly both at UCD and at Maynooth University but then joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1975 where you began your long and distinguished diplomatic career.

Starting in 1975 you worked for many years on Anglo-Irish relations and the Northern Ireland peace process. I know that your father was brought up in Warrenpoint and this background contributed to your understanding of the

complex challenges of achieving peace, reconciliation and political progress in that context: I think that there is little doubt that the skills you developed in this vital work would have been of great utility later in your career in negotiating an agreement amongst 193 different countries!

You were involved in the negotiation of the Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985), the Downing Street Declaration (1993), and the Good Friday Agreement (1998). You were Irish Head of the Anglo-Irish (Maryfield) Secretariat in Belfast, a particularly challenging and sensitive post at the time, from 1995-99 and, in that capacity you were one of the Irish Government's negotiators in the process leading to the Good Friday Agreement.

You became Irish Ambassador to the Russian Federation from 1999-2001, in the early stages of Vladimir Putin's rise to power. You returned to Dublin in 2001 as Director General of Irish Aid. During your three years in charge, you oversaw a significant expansion in the financial resources as well as the geographical and thematic range of the Irish Aid development co-operation programme. This programme has been recognised globally for its high level of effectiveness and positive impact on the livelihoods of the poorest and most vulnerable in our world, and your guidance and leadership at that time was a significant input to establishing that reputation.

Between 2004-09 you were Ireland's Ambassador to Austria and Germany and, in 2009, you returned to Dublin as Political Director in the Department of Foreign Affairs, which involves overall responsibility for Ireland's foreign policy across a wide range of issues from human rights to conflict resolution and other areas.

With this vast experience behind you, in September 2013 you became Ireland's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York. Within a short time, you were being asked to co-facilitate ground-breaking actions and agreements at the United Nations which, I believe, have made an enormous contribution to setting global agendas to address most of the major societal challenges facing us in the coming decades. In 2014, with the Ambassador of Kenya, you co-led the highly complex inter-governmental negotiations at the UN which ultimately resulted in the adoption at the UN General Assembly in September 2015 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals. The focus in the 2030 Agenda on 'Leaving No-one Behind' and on reaching out to the furthest behind first is well reflected in Ireland's new Policy for International Development. I know that these are principles in which you strongly believe and you have lived up to in your own career.

In 2016, and in the context of greatly increased international flows of refugees and migrants displaced by conflict and poverty, you were co-facilitator with Jordan of negotiations which resulted in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which was adopted at a special UN Summit in September 2016. This was the first time that global migration issues were considered and agreed at the UN, and this led to the Global Compact on Refugees and Global Compact on Migration which were agreed at the UN in 2018.

In all your time working in the Irish public service, you were known not only as a person who was willing to undertake the toughest of challenges but as somebody who could enthuse a team of people to work on these difficult challenges and achieve a satisfactory conclusion that was for the betterment of people globally. We salute that ability and commend it to others.

David, when we look at your contributions to peace on this island, and to the betterment of livelihoods and promotion of sustainable development globally, we are immensely grateful to you for a life lived in the service of humanity and in making the world a fairer, safer and better place. We have no doubt that, although you are no longer working in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, you will continue to contribute in these areas. I am therefore very honoured to present you today for the award of Honorary Doctorate of Laws.

**PRAEHONORABILIS CANCELLARIE, TOTAQUE UNIVERSITAS:**

**Praesento vobis, hunc meum filium quem scio tam moribus quam doctrina habilem et idoneum esse qui admittatur, honoris causa, ad gradum Doctoratus in utroque Jure, tam Civili quam Canonico, idque tibi fide mea testor ac spondeo totique Academiae.**