

**PRESIDENT MARY ROBINSON**  
**FORMER PRESIDENT OF IRELAND / PRESIDENT OF THE MARY ROBINSON FOUNDATION**

Mary Robinson, the first woman President of Ireland, founder and former president of Realizing Rights: The Ethical Global Initiative (which came to its planned close in December 2010), and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, has spent most of her life as a human rights advocate. A world leader who puts her humanity very much at the forefront of her politics, in 2009 she was awarded with the Presidential Medal of Freedom—the highest civilian honor— by President Barack Obama, in recognition of her significant contributions to the nation and the world. She now chairs the Council of Women World Leaders and is President of the Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice, a center for thought leadership, education, and advocacy on the struggle for global justice.

President Robinson has been named a “Hero and Icon” as one of *Time* magazine’s 2005 top 100 men and women whose “power, talent, or moral example is transforming the world.” In 2006, President Robinson received Spain’s prestigious Prince of Asturias Award in Social Sciences prize for her work as a global human rights campaigner, singled out for her “moral strength,” her defense of “ethics in the field of politics and academic research,” and her “tireless efforts to bring about a world without borders.”

Broadening her international scope, President Robinson expands her leadership into other areas including business enterprise, corporate citizenship, and the broad reform of some of the world’s most prestigious organizations. She is a member of the Club of Madrid, which works to promote democracy worldwide. In business, she is one of five prestigious board members of the MasterCard Foundation, a newly established independent foundation focusing on microfinance, youth entrepreneurship, and education. President Robinson was recently appointed to the UN Global Compact Board, a group of 20 global business, labor, and social leaders working to advance ten universal business principles in the areas of human rights, labor, the environment, and anti-corruption for this large voluntary corporate citizenship initiative. With her emphasis on making human rights the compass which charts a course for globalization that is fair, just, and benefits all, she retains a high visibility on pressing issues such as global health, the battle against poverty, and supporting microfinance in many nations.

Robinson is also a member of The Elders, a group of world leaders who contribute their wisdom, independent leadership, and integrity to tackling some of the world’s toughest problems with the goal of making the world a better place. This group of luminaries was founded by Nelson Mandela, Graca Machel, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

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Based in New York, her work with Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative was supported by a partnership with the Aspen Institute, Columbia University (where she is a professor of practice), and the Swiss-based International Council on Human Rights Policy. Its goal was to bring the norms and standards of human rights into the globalization process and to support capacity building in good governance in developing countries. The recipient of numerous honors and awards throughout the world, President Robinson is a member of the Royal Irish Academy and the American Philosophical Society and is Honorary President of Oxfam International. She also serves on many boards including the Vaccine Fund, the Global Commission on Migration, the Business Leaders Initiative on Human Rights, the International Commission of Jurists, the Institute of Human Rights and Business, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, and the European Climate Foundation.

Educated at the University of Dublin (Trinity College), King's Inns Dublin, and Harvard Law School (to which she won a fellowship in 1967), she holds honorary doctorates from over 40 universities around the world, including Harvard, Yale, Brown, Columbia, Oxford, Cambridge, London, and Edinburgh. Continuing her educational experience, she now serves as Extraordinary Professor at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, as well as a Council of Goodwill Ambassador.

As an academic, legislator, and barrister, she has always sought to use law as an instrument for social change, arguing landmark cases before the European Court of Human Rights as well as in the Irish courts and the European Court in Luxembourg. In 1988, President Robinson and her husband, Nicholas Robinson, founded the Irish Centre for European Law at the University of Dublin; since then, she has been Chancellor of the University.

### **TOPICS:**

- Leading Through a Lens of Justice & Ethics
- Enterprise & Ethical Globalization
- Making Human Rights the Compass for All Ethical Globalization
- A Woman Leading the World
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Climate Justice