



# RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

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## Mary Robinson - Biography



Mary Robinson, the first woman President of Ireland (1990-1997), and more recently United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (1997-2002), has spent most of her life as a human rights advocate. Born Mary Bourke in Ballina, County Mayo (1944), the daughter of two physicians, she was educated at the University of Dublin (Trinity College), King's Inns Dublin and Harvard Law School to which she won a fellowship in 1967.

As an academic (Trinity College Law Faculty 1968-90), legislator (Senator 1969-89) and barrister (1967-90, Senior Counsel 1980, English Bar 1973), 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 Luxemburg. A committed European, she also served on expert European Community and Irish parliamentary committees.

In 1970, she married Nicholas Robinson, lawyer, conservationist and an authority on eighteenth-century caricature. They have a daughter and two sons. In 1988 Mary Robinson and her husband founded the Irish Centre for European Law at the Trinity College. Ten years later she was elected Chancellor of the University.

The recipient of numerous honours and awards throughout the world, Mary Robinson is a member of the Elders, Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders and Vice President of the Club of Madrid. She is chair of the GAVI Fund Executive Committee and Vice-chair of the GAVI Fund Board. She chairs the Fund for Global Human Rights and is Honorary President of Oxfam International and Patron of the International Community of Women Living with AIDS (ICW). She serves on several boards including the Global Compact, is a member of the Royal Irish Academy and the American Philosophical Society and chairs the Irish Chamber Orchestra.

Now based in New York, Mary Robinson is currently the President of Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative. Its mission is to make human rights the compass which charts a course for globalization that is fair, just and benefits all.



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