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President hosts Irish premiere of environmental film inspired by Pope Francis's Laudato Si' encyclical

'We must regain our resonance with the world to avoid passing on a hostile and volatile planet Earth'



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Pictured at the Irish Premiere of the new climate change movie *The Letter – A Message for our Earth* at Áras an Uachtaráin are: director **Nicolas Brown**, **Lorna Gold** of the Laudato Si' Movement, **Sabina Higgins** and **President Michael D Higgins**.

Photograph: Mark Stedman/Stedman Photography

Citizens of the world have to regain resonance with nature and each other to avoid passing on a hostile and volatile planet Earth to future generations, according to President Michael D Higgins.

Speaking before the Irish premiere of *The Letter – A Message for our Earth* at Áras an Uachtaráin, the President said Pope Francis spoke of a "culture of indifference and has challenged us all not to avert our gaze or to turn away from those who suffer on our shared planet" as a consequence of the climate and biodiversity crises.

"As a society, we must regain our resonance with the world – with nature and each other – if we are to have any hope of avoiding the bequeathment to the next generations of a hostile and volatile planet Earth," the President said.

The film, based on the ground-breaking encyclical *Laudato Si'* with its theme of "care for our common home", made an important contribution to the debate connecting ecology, economics, social justice and ethics, Mr Higgins said.

"It calls for urgent collective action to address the climate crisis and provide a sustainable future for all lifeforms on our planet," the President said.

"We must all have the courage to speak out and work to transform, replace what has brought us to the point of destruction in social and ecological terms, and work collectively for the human alternative that is possible, Pope Francis' call is for all the life on mother Earth."

Chair of the *Laudato Si'* Movement Lorna Gold, who features in the production, said the film "brings home the present reality of climate change and how it is affecting so many in different ways".

"Through telling stories about real people from around the world, the film taps into our deepest humanity. Despite telling hard truths, it motivates us to do act decisively together to build a better future," Ms Gold said.

Director Nicolas Brown said he was not a religious person but after making *The Letter*, he believed the greatest existential threats humans have ever faced as a species – biodiversity loss and climate change – would only be solved "once the human race unites behind a cause greater than ourselves, and we respond to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor all at once. Pope Francis, along with the protagonists in the film, have shown us how that journey can begin".

The Letter has already had over eight million views on YouTube. The screening at Arás an Uachtaráin formally kicks off a series of community screenings of *The Letter*, supported by Trócaire. The film can be viewed free online at www.theletterfilm.org.

This website also provides details on forthcoming local screenings and further information on how to organise community screenings.