



Welcome
by
the President of Iceland
Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson

It is an historic occasion when the first conference specifically devoted to autism is held in Iceland. Appropriately, it is taking place on the 30th anniversary of the foundation of the Icelandic Autistic Society.

We welcome a distinguished gathering of scientists and researchers to our country and are encouraged by the progress which your dialogue has created in recent years.

We have gradually succeeded in raising public understanding of autism to a new and more positive level. Our societies have started to face up to the challenges created by those who suffer from autism and by their families.

Fortunately, when addressing these challenges, the Nordic nations can draw on a sound tradition of welfare and social services which provides us with guidelines for how to progress.

In this evolution it is fundamentally important that action and system improvements should be based on a solid foundation of research and scientific discovery.

I therefore welcome you all to Iceland and hope that the beauty and the dynamism of the natural environment in Iceland, and the extraordinary summer light, will inspire your work and your vision.

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