

The Elders urge world leaders to take bold and decisive action on climate in 2015

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In a [letter to heads of state and government](#) attending the launch of the new UN Sustainable Development Goals in New York on 26 September, The Elders told leaders:

“2015 is the year in which the community of nations will conclude two of the most important international processes of our times [...] You have a decisive role to play in charting the course of history.”

The Sustainable Development Goals are the successors to the UN’s Millennium Development Goals which ran from 2000 to 2015. The COP 21 summit in Paris in December is seen by scientists as the last opportunity to commit to meaningful action to prevent a future climate catastrophe.

“If action is not taken immediately to stop and reverse current climate trends, we shall face a world with average global temperatures several degrees higher than when we were children,” The Elders warned.

Specifically, they urged leaders attending the launch of the SDGs to:

- Inject a new sense of urgency into the Paris negotiations to secure an international binding agreement that would limit the increase in average global temperature to less than two degrees Celsius;
- Establish a goal for all nations to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 and agree a timetable to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, with early action on coal;
- Commit to mechanisms within the Paris agreement that can assess progress and ratchet up the commitment of all signatories on climate mitigation and adaptation efforts every five years;
- Approve a financial package that increases investment in clean energy and supports climate adaptation by poor countries.

Even at this late stage, The Elders believe that transformative leadership can yield radical and sustainable results, telling heads of state and government:

“You can prove to be an historic generation of leaders who will have a profound and positive impact that echoes throughout the century [...] the courage and conviction you show will be remembered for decades to come.”

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About The Elders

The Elders are independent leaders using their collective experience and influence for peace, justice and human rights worldwide. The group was founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007.

The Elders are [Martti Ahtisaari](#), [Kofi Annan](#) (Chair), [Ela Bhatt](#), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#) (Deputy Chair), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#), [Hina Jilani](#), [Graça Machel](#), [Mary Robinson](#) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#).

[Desmond Tutu](#) is an honorary Elder.

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For biographies of the Elders, blogs, photos, videos and more information about their work please go to www.theElders.org.

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