

The Elders welcome US-North Korea agreement on nuclear moratorium and food aid to North Korean people

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Elders welcome the announcement on 29 February that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) has agreed to a moratorium on uranium enrichment, nuclear tests and long-range missile launches, as well as to allow the return of inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Former US President **Jimmy Carter** said:

"The moratorium is a welcome and necessary first step towards the full denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, which is essential for stability and lasting peace in the region. I am encouraged by the willingness of the new North Korean leadership to reengage with the international community. The Elders hope this agreement will lead to full compliance with prior commitments by all parties."

The announcement follows three rounds of talks between US and North Korean officials since July 2011, the latest of which was held in Beijing on 23-24 February.

The Elders also commend the United States for agreeing to send a proposed package of 240,000 tonnes of food aid to North Korea, in the form of nutritional assistance for the most vulnerable sectors of its population.

"The proposed US food aid is a welcome recognition of genuine humanitarian need in North Korea," said former Norwegian Prime Minister, **Dr Gro Brundtland**, a medical doctor by profession who [visited North Korea](#) as part of an Elders delegation in April 2011. She added: *"The Elders have repeatedly emphasised the need for external assistance to help address the serious food shortages in North Korea."*

Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland said:

"Full transparency is needed in relation to the food and health situation in North Korea. In our discussions with North Korean officials, we emphasised that there must be adequate monitoring arrangements in place to ensure food aid reaches its intended recipients, especially young children and pregnant women."

"To address chronic food insecurity and related health problems, we also call on the authorities in Pyongyang to adopt practical measures to improve the wellbeing of the North Korean people."

The Elders are encouraged that US and North Korean officials have stated their intention to continue bilateral talks and are willing to take other reciprocal steps aimed at improving their relations.

Former President of Finland **Martti Ahtisaari** said:

“This week’s agreement between the US and North Korea is just a beginning. It is important to sustain this incipient dialogue, to build trust and confidence between the parties, reduce tensions and eventually address all outstanding issues on the Korean Peninsula.”

The Elders and the Korean Peninsula

A delegation of Elders led by Jimmy Carter and accompanied by Martti Ahtisaari, Gro Brundtland and Mary Robinson visited North Korea, South Korea and China in April 2011 to encourage dialogue and address security and humanitarian concerns.

The group continues to engage in private advocacy and diplomacy on the key issues and monitor developments closely in the region.

Report: [The Elders' visit to the Korean Peninsula and China, April 2011](#)

About The Elders

The Elders are independent global leaders working together for peace and human rights. The group was founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007.

The Elders are [Martti Ahtisaari](#), [Ela Bhatt](#), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Brundtland](#), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#), [Graça Machel](#), [Mary Robinson](#) and [Desmond Tutu](#) (Chair). [Nelson Mandela](#) and [Aung San Suu Kyi](#) are honorary Elders.

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