

The Elders: reflecting on Mandela's mission and the global challenges ahead

Jimmy Carter, Mary Robinson and Desmond Tutu visit London

London, Monday 2 July 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Three members of The Elders are visiting London from 2-4 July to discuss and advance their work on some of the world's most intractable problems – including the challenges of rising inequality and youth unemployment in developed countries.

During their visit, Jimmy Carter, Mary Robinson and Desmond Tutu will meet UK Foreign Secretary William Hague and participate in a [public debate](#) in the Barbican Hall, presented by Intelligence Squared. They will also meet UK parliamentarians and, in the spirit of [Mandela Day](#), visit grassroots charities helping young people to promote and encourage volunteering.

This visit to London comes at the time of The Elders' fifth anniversary. In those five years, its members have worked to fulfil the vision set by their founder and Honorary Elder, Nelson Mandela, to become "a fiercely independent and robust force for good, tackling complex and intractable issues, especially those that are not popular."

Together they have worked to promote peace in Sudan and South Sudan, Israel and the Palestinian Territories and on the Korean Peninsula, supported reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire and Cyprus and pressed for greater accountability in Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. They have created [Girls Not Brides](#), a new global campaign to end child marriage and have been actively engaged in efforts to make sustainable development a reality.

Desmond Tutu, Chair of The Elders, said:

"It is an honour to be Chair of this group and to work with my friends, my fellow Elders, as I have done these past five years. When I look around the table at our meetings I have to pinch myself sometimes!

"As Elders, we often travel to places of deep unrest and suffering. Here in the UK, we want to continue efforts to address the threats faced by the world's most vulnerable people. But we know that affluent countries are also in trouble, as inequity continues to erode the hopes and life chances of the young. I look forward to learning how London's young people are faring."

Former US President **Jimmy Carter** said:

"We never forget what Nelson Mandela told us when he founded The Elders: be bold. We have always tried to do that, whether we are in Khartoum or Juba, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Gaza, Pyongyang or Seoul, or any of the troubled places where we collectively work, meet with leaders and listen to the people.

"Madiba's message continues to resonate with urgency. The popular revolutions of the Arab world only serve to convince us that we should continue to support those who call on their governments to uphold and strengthen the principles of justice and human rights, in the name of peace."

Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said:

"As our Chair Desmond Tutu says, we are still 'learning to Elder'. We live in a fast-changing world and must retain a sense of humility, as a self-selected group trying to bridge the gap between the grassroots and leaders, often in very difficult contexts.

"Our visit is a good example of how we work. We will be meeting the Foreign Secretary and parliamentarians, and, in observance of Mandela Day, will also spend time with charities supporting London's most vulnerable youth, to learn about their achievements and needs. Mandela Day stands for the idea that everyone can change their local communities for the better, and in turn change the world – we hope this message resonates with someone growing up in London today."

PROGRAMME

Monday 2 July 2012

[The Elders in Conversation with Jon Snow](#)

Hosted by [Intelligence Squared](#)

19:00-20:30, Barbican Hall, Barbican Centre

Please contact [Intelligence Squared](#) for media access.

Tuesday 3 July 2012

Private meetings with Foreign Secretary William Hague and Members of Parliament and Peers

Wednesday 4 July 2012

[Mandela Day event](#)

Hosted by [The Funding Network](#)

12:00-14:00, CBI Conference Centre, Centre Point Tower, First Floor

Media must pre-register to attend and availability is very limited.

Please contact media@theElders.org

MEDIA CONTACT

Please note the Elders are not available for interview. (All time slots have been filled).

For photos of the Elders' visit to local London youth charities on Wednesday 4 July, or for any further information, please contact media@theElders.org

About Mandela Day

Taking place each year on 18 July, Mandela Day calls on people around the world to celebrate Nelson Mandela's life and legacy by serving their communities and taking action to build a better world.

Nelson Mandela devoted 67 years to combating injustice and fighting for human rights. Mandela Day calls on people to give 67 minutes of their time to make a difference in their communities.

As part of their visit to London, the Elders will mark Mandela Day and encourage volunteering and engagement to make a positive difference. Jimmy Carter, Mary Robinson and Desmond Tutu will be meeting grassroots organisations working with and for young people to celebrate our collective power to do good and inspire change.

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](#), [Ela Bhatt](#), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#), [Graça Machel](#), [Mary Robinson](#) and [Desmond Tutu](#) (Chair). [Kofi Annan](#) has temporarily recused himself following his appointment as UN/Arab League Joint Special Envoy on the Syrian crisis.

[Nelson Mandela](#) is an honorary Elder.

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

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