

## Venezuelans to be congratulated for their deep commitment to democratic practice

***“It is crucial that they work with the country’s leaders to overcome the entrenched polarization which has proved so detrimental to Venezuela’s well-being and security” - Kofi Annan***

9 December 2015

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The Elders congratulate the people of Venezuela on the exercise of their democratic rights as demonstrated by the high voter turnout for the National Assembly elections held last Sunday. The peaceful conduct of the elections was reassuring and clearly reflects a deep commitment to democratic practice by the Venezuelan people.

The Elders commend the hard work of the National Electoral Council and its thousands of poll workers, domestic election observers and security services, which allowed people to cast their votes as they wished, free of violence.

They urge all parties and candidates to ensure that any electoral disputes or challenges that arise are addressed through appropriate legal channels.

Commenting on the elections, former President of Mexico [Ernesto Zedillo](#) remarked that:

*“The result is a victory for democracy; it shows that real change can, and should, be achieved through the ballot box.”*

[Kofi Annan](#), Chair of the Elders, added:

*“Venezuela’s new legislators will assume office at a difficult period for the country. As the winners of these elections take their seats, it is crucial that they work with the country’s leaders to overcome the entrenched polarization which has proved so detrimental to Venezuela’s well-being and security.”*

Looking forward, The Elders encourage the Venezuelan authorities to further strengthen the integrity of Venezuela’s electoral process, so that they continue to command the confidence

and respect of the Venezuelan people. The Elders and other partners in the international community stand ready to support that effort.

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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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