

Kofi Annan, Chair
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Ricardo Lagos
Graça Machel
Mary Robinson
Desmond Tutu, Honorary Elder
Ernesto Zedillo

London, 4 July 2016

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of The Elders, in advance of the UN El Niño high level meeting to be held in July in New York, to express our great concern at the humanitarian crisis caused by El Niño-induced drought. Notwithstanding the many other pressures on aid budgets at this time, not least due the Syria crisis, we urge you to give generously in response. There is currently a \$2.5bn funding gap between the amount needed by those countries affected by El Niño to deal with the crisis and what has so far been provided by donors.

The current El Niño event is one of the strongest on record. As a result, over 60 million people around the world are suffering from shortages of food and water. I am particularly concerned about the situation in Southern Africa, which faces its worst drought in 35 years and has thus far received only a small amount of funding to assist the response.

This crisis is not a one-off. Global temperatures continue to rise due to human-induced climate change, increasing the frequency and strength of extreme weather events. Naturally occurring El Niño events add further weather disruption in a world already affected by climate change.

In addition to increased aid for the most drought affected countries, The Elders would respectfully recommend two additional measures to your Government. Firstly, to increase your financial support for the development of comprehensive risk contingency planning and preparedness measures in climate vulnerable countries. In the near term, towards the end of 2016, there is a high probability of dangerous flooding in areas currently affected by drought.

Secondly, we recommend that your Government agree with other countries at the UN climate change negotiations, COP22, in November, a clear and concrete roadmap for achieving the \$100bn annual commitment for climate action in developing countries by 2020. Extreme weather events hit the poorest communities – those least responsible for climate change – the hardest.

Significantly increased financing is thus essential to build resilience and protect the most vulnerable.

As an international community, we must respond rapidly and comprehensively to the current crisis. In so doing, we must also develop the necessary long-term planning to deal effectively and fairly with the challenges climate change will bring in coming years. I am confident that your country will play its part in ensuring that the world's most vulnerable people are protected now and into the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Annan', with a small mark below it.

Kofi Annan
Chair, The Elders