

The Elders urge increased public financing and political will to deliver UHC in India

NEW DELHI, 6 September 2018

The Elders today called on India's leaders to increase public financing on health and show sustained political commitment to deliver Universal Health Coverage (UHC) which would help lift tens of millions of people out of poor health and poverty.

Speaking at the launch of their [new report on UHC](#) in India, The Elders warned that the country is currently facing a “*public health crisis*” which risks impeding economic growth and makes it harder to achieve the wider Sustainable Development Goals.

India currently has around 600 million people without effective health coverage, the largest number worldwide, and 63 million people are living in poverty because of health costs.

The Elders' report contains four key recommendations to achieve UHC, which means that everybody receives the health services they need without suffering financial hardship:

- 1. Increase public financing for health to 2.5% of GDP by 2021**
- 2. Focus on reaching full population coverage and prioritising the needs of the poor and vulnerable**
- 3. Focus additional resources on primary healthcare services including vital public health services**
- 4. Guarantee universal access to free essential medicines and diagnostic services**

[Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), Acting Chair of The Elders and former Director-General of the World Health Organization, said:

“We believe that given its wealth, pace of development, standards of education and talent of its people, India can and must do better to achieve Universal Health Coverage. To be successful, all stakeholders must address the reasons for past failures and poor health outcomes – including inadequate public financing and a lack of focus on primary healthcare.”

[Ban Ki-moon](#), Elder and former Secretary-General of the United Nations, added:

“Universal Health Coverage should not be seen as a vague aspiration, but a commitment India's government made when it signed up to the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. I urge

people in India to see UHC as your right to affordable healthcare and that you hold your leaders to account for its delivery.”

On their two-day visit to Delhi, the Elders will hold meetings with national government ministers and officials, and the Chief Minister and Health Minister of Delhi State. They will also visit a “Mohalla” neighbourhood clinic in Delhi that delivers universal free healthcare to all residents irrespective of their economic status.

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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](#) (1938-2018), [Ban Ki-moon](#), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#) (Acting Chair), [Hina Jilani](#), [Ricardo Lagos](#), [Graça Machel](#), [Mary Robinson](#) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#).

[Ela Bhatt](#), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#) and [Desmond Tutu](#) are Elders Emeritus.

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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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