

#Walk Together

CONTINUE MANDELA'S
LONG WALK TO FREEDOM



#WalkTogether

The
Elders

Walk Together to spark hope in the world

*Ten years on, The Elders continue
Mandela's long walk to freedom*

Annual Review 2017

Join the
movement









Photo: Riku Isohella

From left: Hina Jilani, Graça Machel, Ernesto Zedillo, Kofi Annan, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Ricardo Lagos, Martti Ahtisaari and Mary Robinson during The Elders' Board Meeting in Helsinki, Finland in May 2017.

The Elders are a group of independent leaders, brought together by Nelson Mandela in 2007, who use their collective experience and influence for peace, justice and human rights worldwide.

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

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- Kofi Annan**, Chair
- Gro Harlem Brundtland**, Deputy Chair
- Martti Ahtisaari**
- Ban Ki-moon**
- Ela Bhatt**, Elder Emeritus
- Lakhdar Brahimi**
- Fernando Henrique Cardoso**, Elder Emeritus
- Jimmy Carter**, Elder Emeritus
- Hina Jilani**
- Ricardo Lagos**
- Graça Machel**
- Mary Robinson**
- Ernesto Zedillo**
- Desmond Tutu**, Elder Emeritus



Photo: Joël Saget / AFP

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

“Everyone has a role to play and a responsibility to take in the long walk to freedom.”

Kofi Annan

We live in troubled and turbulent times. The last twelve months have seen a series of shocks to the multilateral system that has underpinned geopolitical stability since the end of the Second World War, and the year ahead is likely to bring more disruption and uncertainty.

But 2017 was also a proud year for The Elders as we celebrated our tenth anniversary. This provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on the achievements we have made since Nelson Mandela gathered us together in Johannesburg in July 2007, and how we can continue to fulfil his mandate in the future and further the cause of peace and human rights.

We were also honoured to welcome Ban Ki-moon and Ricardo Lagos as new members of the group, and have greatly valued their commitment, passion and expertise across all our initiatives.

A key aspect of our anniversary celebrations was the launch of our year-long “Walk Together” campaign in Cape Town on Mandela Day, 18 July 2017. Through this campaign we hope to shine a light on brave grassroots activists worldwide, walking in solidarity with them – sometimes physically, sometimes via digital networks – in their struggle for the freedoms that Madiba cherished and spent his life fighting for.

When Madiba **founded The Elders** in 2007, he gave us a specific mandate: to “support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict, and inspire hope where there is despair”.

Fear, conflict and despair are all too abundant in today’s world. From Syria to **South Sudan**, Yemen to **Myanmar**, states and regions are wracked by vicious, pitiless conflicts, with the international community either too divided, unwilling or powerless to intervene.

The nuclear tensions on the **Korean Peninsula** remain among the most acute and urgent threats to global peace. They can only be resolved in 2018 if leaders in Washington and Pyongyang address the issues in a calm, sober and respectful way, with the support of the United Nations. The flurry of diplomatic activity around the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang should now be built upon by all sides to try to establish substantial dialogue on all fronts and foster a degree of mutual reassurance.

A similar approach, which respects multilateral processes, international law and human rights, will

be needed to defuse dangerous tensions in **Israel and Palestine**. As ever, it is ordinary people who suffer when leaders make rash decisions and deploy inflammatory rhetoric for political goals.

Terrorism continues to spread a bloody stain across the globe, from the streets of London to the sands of the Sinai, slaying innocents in an obscene offence against our civilised human values.

How we respond to these atrocities is a test of these values. Whatever the outrage, there can be no excuse for torture, extra-judicial killings, collective punishment of whole communities or a clampdown on freedom of speech or human rights.

As we contemplate present and future challenges, it is also important to study the past for valuable lessons and perspectives.

One hundred years ago, the First World War was entering its final year, whilst independence movements were stirring in African and Asian countries still ruled and repressed by Western colonial powers.

Resolving violent conflicts, respecting the rights of self-determination for oppressed peoples and protecting universal freedoms are just as important now as then. And there is a thread that ties these values to both points in time: the life of our founder, **Nelson Mandela**.

When he left prison in 1990 after 27 years of incarceration, Mandela knew that the only way to build a free and just society was to act with what he termed “kindness and generous accommodation”.

It is to be hoped that the new leaders in South Africa and neighbouring Zimbabwe take Madiba’s words to heart into 2018, and chart a new course for their countries that affirms the values of democracy and human rights for all, setting a clear example to other African leaders and the wider world.

But as Mandela always insisted, everyone has a role to play and a responsibility to take in the long walk to freedom regardless of age, experience, race, gender or social background. In the year ahead, we must show the same courage as he did, act with the same compassion and empathy, and help build a world of which he would be proud.



Photo: Jeff Moore

FOREWORD FROM THE CEO

“One of the most heartening developments of the last twelve months has been the growth of strong civil society movements determined to oppose the poison of racism, xenophobia and discrimination.”

David Nussbaum

2017 was a landmark year for The Elders. We celebrated our tenth anniversary in July. We used this moment not just to reflect on the achievements of the past decade but to look to the future, launching our innovative “Walk Together” campaign to champion freedoms our founder Nelson Mandela dedicated his life to - Peace, Health, Justice and Equality - and to support groups and individuals still fighting for these.

Throughout the year, The Elders undertook a substantial and varied programme of work across all our programmatic initiatives, including country visits, meetings with heads of state, participation in international summits, and dialogue with civil society activists and young leaders.

This activity took place amid a challenging global geopolitical context. Tensions were particularly high in the Middle East; savage conflicts persisted in Africa, not least in South Sudan; hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims were expelled from their homes in Myanmar with scant prospect of return; and populist movements continued to stoke fears and prejudice against refugees and migrants especially across the Western world.

The need for The Elders to speak out and stand up for peace, justice and human rights is thus as great as it has ever been. But theirs is not a lone voice; one of the most heartening developments of the last twelve months has been the growth of strong civil society movements determined to oppose the poison of racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

From the Women’s March in January 2017 across the United States to the global wave of solidarity sparked by the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements, and the continued support for the Paris Agreement on climate change despite the policies of the new

US Administration, there are many reasons to remain hopeful.

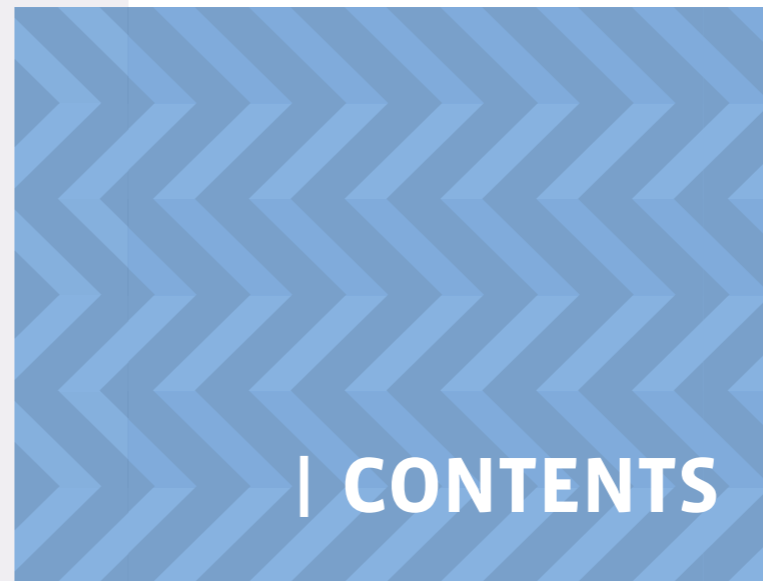
A vivid illustration of the power of solidarity came on 18 July, when Elders, members of our Advisory Council and civil society partners met in Cape Town to celebrate the organisation’s tenth anniversary, and what would have been Nelson Mandela’s 99th birthday.

It was an unforgettable privilege to walk together through the city streets and listen to the experiences of youth workers and civil society activists in tackling prejudice, violence, inequality and discrimination. The unique nature of the day was capped off, for me, by a musical performance by Hugh Masekela, the great icon of resistance to apartheid whose music struck a chord with people all around the world. His death just a few months later makes the memory of that day in Cape Town all the more poignant.

The Elders engaged in many important discussions in 2017: with the new Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres, and with members of the UN Security Council in New York; with Pope Francis in the Vatican on the need for compassion for refugees and migrants; with President Macron of France on the fight against climate change and the importance of strengthening international institutions.

In 2018 we will maintain this dialogue and continue to champion the voices of those on the front lines of defending freedom and human rights. In all our efforts we will be guided by the wise words of Nelson Mandela when he launched The Elders a decade ago: “I believe that in the end it is kindness and generous accommodation that are the catalysts for real change.”

David Nussbaum
Chief Executive



Credit: The Elders

Returning resident from District Six community at #WalkTogether launch event in Cape Town, South Africa in July 2017.

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THE ELDERS' VISION AND MISSION

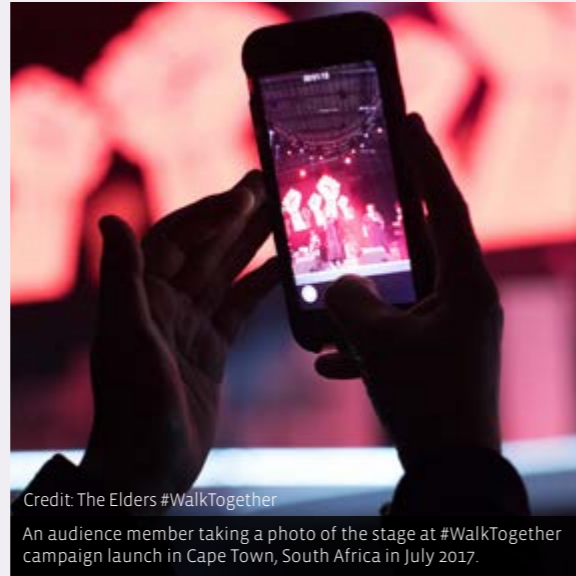
The Elders was founded in 2007 by Nelson Mandela to “support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict and inspire hope where there is despair”.

Ten years on, the organisation’s collective identity is strongly rooted in this mandate bestowed by Mandela. The Elders’ independence and integrity are fundamental, enabling them to speak freely and boldly, working both publicly and behind the scenes to help tackle complex and intractable issues.

Charged with this mandate, the Elders use their independence, collective experience and influence to work for peace, justice and human rights worldwide. Working both publicly and through private diplomacy, they engage with global leaders and civil society at all levels to resolve conflict and address its root causes, to challenge injustice, and to promote ethical leadership and good governance.

“The need to continue working towards protecting freedoms around the world is as important today as it ever has been.”

Graça Machel



Credit: The Elders #WalkTogether
An audience member taking a photo of the stage at #WalkTogether campaign launch in Cape Town, South Africa in July 2017.

The Elders’ role is often catalytic: they create space for others whose causes are aligned with their vision for a better future. They aim to strengthen the voices of emerging leaders with integrity, sometimes supporting those who wish to take a courageous political position, lending the Elders’ moral authority to a course of action that is inherently right although not immediately popular.

The Elders also seek to give a voice to some of those who are voiceless, for example through sharing their experiences publicly during a country visit in which they hear directly from marginalised people about the consequences of conflict or other failures of leadership, or bringing those stories into international forums.

Throughout their first decade, the Elders’ range of approaches to their work has included:

- International travel (country visits, speaking at international conferences, holding high-level and grassroots meetings)
- Letters sent privately, sometimes with a public statement issued in parallel
- Private phone calls to government and other leaders
- Convening or co-hosting private meetings and events with select public audiences
- Public statements, often with follow-up media work, opinion pieces, blogs or interviews.



Credit: The Elders #WalkTogether

Ban Ki-moon (centre) at #WalkTogether for #HealthForAll event with policymakers, health professionals and civil society partners at Bellevue Hospital in New York in November 2017.

These approaches will continue in the context of the new 2018-22 Strategic Framework. This Framework has been designed to provide institutional coherence to ongoing policy and communications activities.

The Elders’ Strategic Framework is structured around three key themes:

- Governance and Leadership
- Conflict, its Causes and Consequences
- Inequality, Exclusion and Injustice.

Many of the issues on which The Elders work cannot neatly be contained within one theme, but encompass elements of two or all three. This is why The Elders favour a holistic approach which considers all the diverse aspects to any geopolitical problem, and includes the range of relevant stakeholders when trying to arrive at a sustainable outcome.

The comparative advantage of the group is that its members represent no vested interest and are free from any national or institutional influence. The Elders can “speak truth to power” from a genuinely objective standpoint, and use their position to amplify the voices of marginalised and disempowered groups, particularly victims of conflict and discrimination.

To mark their tenth anniversary in 2017, The Elders launched a new year-long campaign called “Walk Together”. This seeks to reassert the values and freedoms that Nelson Mandela fought for throughout his life, and to champion grassroots activists who are continuing that fight today. In partnership with global civil society organisations, The Elders have walked in solidarity with these activists and young leaders – both physically, and via digital platforms – to build a “bright web of hope” that will inspire future generations. More information about this campaign, and indeed all the work of The Elders, can be found online.

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The Elders believe strongly that the United Nations (UN) is a necessary and core part of the global governance system, with a pivotal role in promoting sustainable development and upholding peace and security. In keeping with this, The Elders' Strengthening the UN initiative, launched at the Munich Security Conference in February 2015, has proposed four reforms to the United Nations' peace and security architecture that would enhance the UN's legitimacy and efficacy. In 2017, the Elders particularly focused on one of their proposals, to implement a code of conduct to restrain the use of the veto in the Security Council when mass atrocities are taking place, as well as more broadly promoting and defending the values and principles of the United Nations.

In May, Kofi Annan led a delegation of Elders to meet with the new UN Secretary-General António Guterres in New York, where they had a productive and wide-ranging discussion on the Secretary-General's agenda and the major global threats facing the international community. The Elders also held a private meeting with the UN Security Council, in which Kofi Annan delivered a stark message reminding Council members of their responsibility to work together to uphold the Security Council's special mandate to uphold global peace and security. Kofi Annan, Gro Brundtland, Lakhdar Brahimi and Mary Robinson also held a public event at the International Peace Institute on "The Importance of Multilateralism", and Gro Brundtland, Lakhdar Brahimi and Mary Robinson addressed the UN Noon Briefing during their visit.

The Elders also engaged specifically on UN issues during the high level week of the UN General Assembly in New York in September. Mary Robinson spoke on a panel at an event on preventing and ending mass



Gro Harlem Brundtland speaks at an International Peace Institute event on multilateralism in New York in May 2017. Credit: International Peace Institute

atrocities, organised jointly by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group of countries and the French and Mexican governments. Mary Robinson used her speech to express The Elders' support for initiatives put forward by these countries to introduce a code of conduct on preventing mass atrocities, and to highlight the recent unacceptable failures of the UN Security Council to prevent or reduce conflict around the world, from Syria to South Sudan.

Elsewhere during high-level week, Graça Machel participated in a high-level meeting organised by the UN Secretary-General to highlight commitments from member states to end sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers. This is an issue that Elders closely followed during 2017: several Elders met with Jane Holl Lute, the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator on Improving the UN Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, at the Munich Security Conference in February 2017.

FINANCIAL TIMES Strong moral leadership is needed to combat populist tide

It is time to reassert our values of decent treatment for all



Mary Robinson writes in the Financial Times in January 2017 calling for moral and political leadership in this time of uncertainty.



Credit: UN Photo / Mark Garten

UN Secretary-General António Guterres (centre-right) with Lakhdar Brahimi, Gro Brundtland, Kofi Annan, Mary Robinson and Ernesto Zedillo at the UN in New York in May 2017.

The Elders also released a statement in March welcoming the Secretary-General's strong commitment to improving the UN's record on this issue, including his emphasis on putting victims at the centre of the UN's strategy.

Beyond the United Nations specifically, Elders have additionally made efforts to publicly promote global cooperation during 2017. Mary Robinson wrote an op-ed in January 2017 in the Financial Times on "Moral and Political Leadership in a Time of Uncertainty", in which she argued forcefully that the values which informed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were of continued relevance to the international governance system and should be defended against attack. This was also a central theme of Mary Robinson's speech to the 2017 Partnership Forum at the UN Economic and Social Council in April, focusing once again on the importance of multilateral cooperation.

The Elders also sought to promote values of ethical leadership and international cooperation through specific visits to meet global leaders in 2017. In November, as noted above, a group of Elders led by Kofi Annan met Pope Francis in the Vatican, where they expressed solidarity and support for the Pope's strong moral leadership on key global issues of refugees and migration, climate change, and promoting peace and conflict resolution. Several of

the Elders also met with French President Emmanuel Macron in December, when they discussed a wide-range of global issues threatening the planet, and encouraged the French President to maintain his strong support for international institutions and multilateral cooperation.

While expressing considerable concern at the strength of populist and nationalist forces in 2017, the Elders were encouraged by the strong appetite that still exists across much of the world for ethical leadership based on principles of international solidarity and cooperation, and will continue to promote this message in 2018.

“We need to make changes to the international governance system so that it is more resilient, robust, representative and equipped to adapt to new geopolitical realities and complex long-term challenges.”

Mary Robinson

EQUALITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS AND UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

Equality for girls and women is a cornerstone of The Elders' commitment to securing dignity and rights for all. It informs every aspect of their work and helps determine their priorities for action.

From Universal Health Coverage (UHC), climate change and mass migration, to peacebuilding and defending human rights protectors, The Elders believe that girls and women have specific needs that demand appropriately-tailored policy responses, but also that their voices need to be heard and respected by policymakers.

In 2017, The Elders voiced their alarm and condemnation at what they viewed as retrograde steps from the new US Administration, specifically the decision to introduce the so-called "Global Gag Rule" which blocks US government funding to any agencies that help provide abortion services. They warned that the lives of vulnerable women and children would be put at risk as clinics and other essential services were forced to close.

As anger at sexual abuse and exploitation scandals grew ever more pronounced in 2017, Elders reasserted the importance of seeing women's rights as a wider human rights issue.

Speaking at a high-level Colloquium on Women's Rights organised by the European Union in Brussels in November 2017, Mary Robinson said:

“We need action – and for that to be effective, we need our leaders to be bold, confront prejudice and discrimination wherever it lurks, be honest enough to confront their own records and demand better from themselves and their administrations.”



Credit: The Elders
Gro Harlem Brundtland and Ernesto Zedillo meet Indonesian President Joko Widodo (left) during a visit to Jakarta, Indonesia in November 2017.

To help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, The Elders are championing Universal Health Coverage, a key target within the health Goal. In 2017 they continued their global advocacy campaign using a combination of country visits, high-level speeches and targeted communications activities.

Their message was consistent: UHC is eminently achievable across a wide range of geographic, social and economic environments if political leaders show the requisite will and ambition. Women, children and adolescents as high need groups must be covered as a priority as countries move towards UHC.

In India, The Elders highlighted the pioneering development of "Mohalla" neighbourhood clinics in the State of Delhi as an example to be taken up by the national government. The Elders wrote to the Chief Minister of Delhi in January congratulating him on his efforts, and to the Prime Minister of India and the Chief Minister of the State of Bihar urging greater progress towards UHC. This generated significant media coverage across India and helped raise the national profile of UHC.

Also in January, Gro Brundtland and Ernesto Zedillo attended the Prince Mahidol Awards Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, to give keynote speeches on social inclusion and health policy, and how to develop sustainable financing models for UHC.

In May, Gro Brundtland addressed the World Health Assembly in Geneva on the need for political commitment at all levels to deliver UHC. The event was particularly notable because it featured three Directors-General of the World Health Organization: Gro Brundtland, the outgoing DG Margaret Chan, and her successor Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Later in July, Mary Robinson and Graça Machel visited Tanzania to promote UHC.



Credit: Ibrahim Joseph/The Elders
Graça Machel (second left) and Mary Robinson (centre) visit Mpatatwa Village in rural Tanzania in July 2017 to promote progress towards Universal Health Coverage.

In Dodoma, Tanzania's capital, they were met by the Minister of Health and then visited a small health dispensary in Mpatatwa Village, Bahi District. Here they were greeted by a crowd of around 2,000 community members and officials. They gave speeches and toured the health facility.

Travelling on to Dar es Salaam, they met the Vice President and convened a lively and well-informed civil society organisation debate on UHC in Tanzania.

UHC and access to health care was a key component of the "Walk Together" campaign launched in July 2017 to mark The Elders' tenth anniversary. In November, Gro Brundtland and Ban Ki-moon spoke at an event at the Bellevue Public Hospital in New York as part of Walk Together's "health quarter", which brought together public health activists and local politicians from the city and New York State.

Ban Ki-moon expressed astonishment at the disparity between the high costs of healthcare in the United States, and relatively poorer health outcomes when compared to other nations of the world. He also expressed his sadness that survivors of tragic mass shootings had fallen into potential bankruptcy because they cannot afford their hospital and recovery bills.

The Bellevue event was also complemented by an opinion piece in TIME magazine by Gro Brundtland and Jimmy Carter. The two Elders decried the lack of universal health coverage in the United States as a national scandal, and called on individual States to show political courage and lead the way where Capitol Hill is paralysed.

Following this event, Ernesto Zedillo and Gro Brundtland travelled to Indonesia for discussions with President Jokowi and senior ministers, and a visit to a regional health centre in Jakarta. They commended the country's progress to date on UHC but urged greater ambition to meet the goal of full population coverage by 2019, including increased public health spending and higher taxes on harmful products such as tobacco.

A busy year of UHC activities culminated in December with Ricardo Lagos's participation in the UHC Forum in Tokyo that took place around UHC Day on 12 December. He drew on his own experiences of introducing health reforms as President of Chile, and urged governments to empower people at every level to deliver a truly inclusive health system.



Ricardo Lagos addresses a public event at the UHC Forum in Tokyo, Japan for UHC Day in December 2017.

#WALK TOGETHER: THE ELDERS' 10TH ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN

A year-long initiative to mark The Elders' 10th anniversary and Mandela's centenary



#Walk Together

CONTINUE MANDELA'S LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

A key feature of 2017 has been the public engagement campaign, **#WalkTogether**. Structured as a metaphorical continuation of Nelson Mandela's "long walk to freedom", The Elders marked their 10th anniversary on 18th July 2017 by launching this global public engagement campaign. **#WalkTogether** is a response to the divisions evident in many societies driven by fear, hate speech and xenophobia, which are resulting in threats to civic space and participation.

#WalkTogether set out to offer hope especially to younger generations, reaching them through events and a growing digital movement. The campaign platform has featured storytelling through digital media, celebrating the collective efforts of organisations characterised as "Sparks of Hope". These Sparks of Hope are grassroots organisations working for freedoms to which The Elders' founder, Nelson Mandela dedicated his life – Peace, Health, Justice and Equality. Through their work, they demonstrate both positive impact on their own communities and the ability to unite people to work together, underpinned by the values of compassion and empathy.

The work of these Sparks of Hope organisations is strongly linked to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and thus provides the **#WalkTogether** campaign with a means to highlight the ideas grounded in these inspirational grassroots organisations as having the potential to offer a freer, fairer world for all. By December 2017, over 30 Sparks of Hope stories and related social media promotional tools had been published, with a goal of 100 by July 2018.



The Elders and aspiring policy makers from around the world walked through London with hundreds of local supporters in October 2017 to promote peace. #WalkTogether

The core audiences for the **#WalkTogether** campaign include the next generation (18-35 age group), high level policy makers and influencers around the world. Media communications and public events have raised awareness and promoted opportunities to engage with the Sparks of Hope. As at December 2017, the campaign had reached over 35 million people globally on social media channels and many more through well over 100 media articles and op-eds.

Public events in Cape Town, New York and London in the latter half of 2017 involved young leaders, current political actors, local community members and civil society networks, with further events planned for Latin America and other parts of the world in 2018.

Through the **#WalkTogether** campaign, The Elders have developed strong partnerships with civil society networks that offer the campaign a multiplier effect, since each has deep grassroots reach to thousands of small organisations globally and regionally. The core campaign partners include CIVICUS, the Global Legal Empowerment Network, the Universal Health Coalition, Global Citizen and Restless Development. Partnerships have also been formed with networks that reach younger generations effectively on specific themes or key regions, including the British Council Future Leaders Connect programme, Africans Rising, Search for Common Ground, Last Mile Health and others.



Elder Emeritus Jimmy Carter and current Deputy Chair Gro Harlem Brundtland write in TIME in November 2017. They call for political courage and urge individual States to lead the way on Universal Health Coverage in the United States.

#WALK TOGETHER: THE ELDERS' 10TH ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN



Mosaic of Nelson Mandela made from the profile photos of #WalkTogether online supporters who shared peace Sparks of Hope in October 2017.

CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Mary Robinson addresses the UN Noon Briefing in New York in May 2017. Credit: UN Photo/Mark Garten

#WalkTogether has benefitted from leveraging the trusted networks of the campaign partners to identify validated Sparks of Hope. Other trusted organisations including the Dutch Postcode Lottery, the Skoll Foundation, Virgin Unite and Humanity United have benefitted the campaign by providing additional insights and validated sources for the Sparks of Hope.

The campaign will continue through to July 2018, when The Elders will present “100 Ideas for a Freer, Fairer World” towards the Nelson Mandela centenary celebrations in collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Foundation. The “100 Ideas” will be grounded in the work of the 100 “Sparks of Hope”, which will have been published and supported through digital channels and synchronised live events through the first half of 2018. The Elders will subsequently present the “100 Ideas” to world leaders, in the autumn of 2018.

Throughout 2017, The Elders actively engaged to defend the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in the face of a more hostile international environment, and encouraged greater levels of ambition on climate action from states, regions and civil society alike.

When the new US Administration announced in May its intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, The Elders called on all other signatories to stand firm in their commitments and legal obligations, saying:

“No one country can dismantle the Agreement. While the US withdrawal weakens that international accord, it will not trigger its demise.”

Other international advocacy efforts in 2017 included encouraging the G7 leaders to move beyond words and take meaningful action to phase out fossil fuel subsidies.

The Elders also discussed the moral, political and economic imperatives for climate action during their meetings with Pope Francis in the Vatican in November, and President Macron of France in Paris in December on the occasion of the “One Planet” climate summit.

As Mary Robinson said following the meeting with President Macron:

“The One Planet summit underscores that climate is an issue of human rights, justice and equality as well as environmental sustainability. Faced with a growing wave of populist isolationism and short-term decision making, the world needs to act responsibly to address long-term problems. I am heartened that France is rising to this challenge, following the leadership already shown by least-developed countries, small island states and civil society.”

The Elders’ work on climate change is an integral part of their wider support for the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Development. 2017 also marked the 30th anniversary of Gro Brundtland’s seminal report “Our Common Future”, which helped anchor the concept of sustainable development in global policymaking.

In honour of this anniversary, Gro Brundtland was invited to a high-level conference in Berlin by the German Government to reflect on the legacy of the report and the wider history of the sustainable development movement, including the work of former German Chancellor Willy Brandt and his ground-breaking work on bridging the North-South economic divide.



The Elders, Sparks of Hope and community members launched #WalkTogether in Cape Town, South Africa in July 2017. Credit: The Elders #WalkTogether

BUILDING PEACE AND TACKLING ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT



UN Photo/Kim Haughton
Lakhdar Brahimi addresses the UN Security Council in June 2017.

The Elders believe that all conflicts are capable of being resolved with sufficient political will. Throughout 2017 they sought opportunities both in public and private to support peacebuilding, and to address the root causes of wars and unrest.

There was a tragic continuity to the Elders' focus on Syria throughout 2017, and to other bloody and protracted conflicts in the Middle East that offered scant prospect of progress or resolution, from Yemen to Israel-Palestine. In all these conflicts, The Elders urged leaders to choose dialogue over intransigent posturing, to truly serve the interests of their people.

They also called on the leading international powers, especially the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, to act with vision and ambition for peace. The Elders met all 15 members of the Security Council in New York in May and stressed their shared responsibility to act in a spirit of unity, and especially to protect civilians in armed conflicts around the world.

Lakhdar Brahimi subsequently addressed the Security Council in June on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Six Day War and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. He urged the Council to seize this anniversary to renew its efforts to address the root causes of the conflict and bring peace and justice to Israelis and Palestinians alike after decades of strife:

“Only a genuine, just solution to the Palestinian problem will open the way to lasting peace and cooperation between Israel and all its neighbours... Palestinians have rights; they have individual rights like all human beings and they have collective rights like any other people in the world. And they have the right to fight for their rights with all the legitimate means available to them.”



Lakhdar Brahimi, Kofi Annan, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Mary Robinson following a private meeting with the UN Security Council in New York in May 2017.



Tweet from "Wisdom Wanted" panel discussion during which Gro Harlem Brundtland, Graça Machel and Ernesto Zedillo are joined on stage by Alexander Stubb (right) in Helsinki, Finland in May 2017.

The Elders also spoke out on the deteriorating security and human rights situation in Myanmar in 2017. They strongly supported the work of their Chair, Kofi Annan, and the report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State that he delivered to Myanmar's authorities in August. The Elders continue to believe that this report, if implemented in full, offers the best way to restore peace and dignity to all residents of Rakhine, including the Rohingya community.

Faced with the incontrovertible evidence of mass expulsions, atrocities and human rights abuses against the Rohingya, The Elders in October called on Myanmar's military to end all operations in Rakhine and allow displaced Rohingya to return:

“The violence and displacement, persecution and killings in Rakhine State must stop. The hundreds of thousands of people who have fled their homes must be allowed to return and live dignified lives, and their peace and security must be assured by state security forces.”

REFUGEES AND MIGRATION



Lakhdar Brahimi (right) listens to the story of a Tunisian asylum-seeker during a visit to a reception centre in Sicily, Italy in November 2017. Credit: UNHCR / Alessandro Penso

The Elders continued their work on refugees and migration in 2017, amid a worsening political environment since the September 2016 launch of their report “In Challenge Lies Opportunity: How the World Must Respond to Refugees and Mass Migration”.

The Elders were determined to speak out when and where they would be most effective in defence of a multilateral response to refugees and migration based on the principles of justice, fairness and human rights.

In January 2017, they issued a statement deploring President Trump’s decision to introduce a ban on migration to the United States from predominantly Muslim countries. As Kofi Annan said at the time:

“It is deeply regrettable that a nation of immigrants should turn its back so harshly on refugees escaping violence and war. Curtailing the US resettlement programme, the last lifeline to so many, undermines the great values of a nation that has always championed humanitarian principles and human rights.”

The topic of security and migration took centre stage at the Youth and Leaders’ Summit held at Sciences Po, Paris in the same month, and attended by Lakhdar Brahimi. Panel discussions addressed different specific aspects from the challenges facing governments and institutions: humanitarian challenges; security; and economic and demographic dynamics.

Lakhdar Brahimi argued that the international community must both appreciate the connections between these diverse challenges, but also the necessary distinctions and the need for nuanced, long-term policymaking.

The Elders raised these issues, and their support for the ongoing work of the United Nations in developing Global Compacts on refugees and on migration, at their meetings with the UN Secretary-General and Security Council in New York in May.

On World Refugee Day, 20 June, TIME magazine published an opinion piece by Kofi Annan that called for greater burden-sharing and political responsibility from the prosperous countries of the global North in the face of a global crisis:

“Refugees have slipped from the minds of citizens. When they do appear, it’s often because of irresponsible political rhetoric designed to stoke fears rather than foster genuine debate... Quasi-populist politicians have all too often exploited these fears — when what is needed is responsible leadership shaped by facts, principles and values.”



Credit: Servizio Fotografico L'Osservatore Romano

Pope Francis (right) meets Lakhdar Brahimi, Kofi Annan, Mary Robinson and Ricardo Lagos at the Vatican in November 2017.

Faced with the unwillingness or inability of national governments to rise to the challenge, The Elders also offered encouragement to leaders at other levels, including city mayors and regional governments, who proactively took the initiative. In September, Mary Robinson addressed the Mayors’ Summit in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly and applauded their humane response:

“Cities are at the frontline of this struggle. How they rise to the challenges of reception and integration can demonstrate the great benefits of economic pluralism, which is an essential tool in combating xenophobic and anti-migrant narratives. Cities and their mayors can assert the principles of international cooperation even when national leaders wilfully spurn their responsibilities.”

The Elders were also concerned in 2017 to stand in solidarity with refugees and migrants directly, and ensure their voices were heard in global policy debates. To this end, in November Kofi Annan, Lakhdar

Brahimi and Mary Robinson visited the Cara Mineo refugee centre near Catania, Sicily, to meet migrant families who had braved the perilous Mediterranean crossing from North Africa to Europe. They listened to the hardships they had endured, and discussed the challenges facing them in Italy – specifically the difficulty of finding work to support their families, and the challenges of being reunited with relatives in other European countries.

Immediately after this visit, the three Elders together with Ricardo Lagos met Pope Francis in the Vatican. Their discussions with him included the need for more moral leadership from across the global political spectrum to defend the rights of refugees and migrants, and assert the values of charity and compassion.

All these activities formed part of The Elders’ efforts to build an informal coalition of progressive voices with actors such as the Vatican and the German government (drawing on the meetings with then-Foreign Minister Steinmeier in September 2016). Former Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy cited Hina Jilani’s work with The Elders on refugees and migration when he appointed her in September as one of three global co-chairs of the World Refugee Council which he chairs.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

FOR THE YEAR TO
31 DECEMBER 2017



The Elders' unrestricted income for the year was £2.7 million (2016: £2.4 million), an increase of £0.3 million on the prior year. This includes £0.3 million of funding used for the 10th Anniversary "Walk Together" programme. The Elders' also received restricted funding of £0.2 million for this programme, which was fully expended in the year. The Elders' net deficit for the year was £0.2 million (2016: surplus of £0.3 million).

Costs relate primarily to the delivery of a global programme of activities agreed by the Elders, supported by a Secretariat based in London. This London office provides the Elders with policy research, conducts advocacy and communications work, and is responsible for logistics and other support activities. During 2017 The Elders spent £3.1 million (2016: £2.0 million), an increase of £1.1 million on the prior year. This reflects the varying pattern of expenditure, resulting from different levels and types of engagement from year to year and the long-term nature of our various initiatives.

The Elders launched a new campaign in 2017 to mark their 10th anniversary. The "Walk Together" campaign is a year-long schedule of activities designed to promote and amplify the values mandated to the Elders in Mandela's inaugural speech at the inception of the organisation. The campaign was launched not as an income generating initiative, but rather as a global public engagement campaign.

The Elders ended 2017 with total unrestricted reserves of £3.5 million (2016: £3.8 million). The Elders currently has a reserves policy of retaining at least nine months' expenditure. The Elders considers this level of reserves appropriate to enable good financial management and planning, taking account of the concentration of funders that the organisation currently has. All the charity's reserves are unrestricted.

The following financial information does not constitute the company's statutory accounts, but is extracted therefrom. The statutory accounts dealing with the 2017 financial year have been delivered to Companies House and the Charity Commission. The auditor's report made on the company's statutory accounts for the year was unqualified and did not include a reference to any matters to which the auditor drew attention by way of emphasis.

THE ELDERS FOUNDATION FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017

| | 2017 £000 | 2016 £000 |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| INCOME FROM: | | |
| Donations and grants | | |
| - General | 2,402 | 2,372 |
| - Walk Together | 478 | - |
| Interest income | 7 | 9 |
| TOTAL INCOME | 2,887 | 2,381 |
| EXPENDITURE ON: | | |
| Raising funds | 332 | 179 |
| Charitable activities | | |
| P5 Engagement & Strengthening of the UN | 422 | 355 |
| Refugees and Migrants | 239 | 359 |
| UHC and Equality for Girls and Women | 511 | 327 |
| Ethical Leadership & Elders & Youngers | 11 | 10 |
| Africa | 288 | 186 |
| Middle East | 410 | 230 |
| Myanmar | 155 | 203 |
| Climate Change & SDGs | 208 | 188 |
| Walk Together | 550 | - |
| Total charitable activities expenditure | 2,794 | 1,858 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 3,126 | 2,037 |
| Net (expenditure)/income and net movement in funds | (239) | 344 |
| Fund balances brought forward | 3,789 | 3,445 |
| Fund balances carried forward | 3,550 | 3,789 |

THE ELDERS FOUNDATION BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2017

| | 2017 £000 | 2016 £000 |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| FIXED ASSETS | | |
| Tangible assets | 32 | 61 |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Debtors | 79 | 71 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | 3,511 | 3,704 |
| TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS | 3,590 | 3,775 |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | (72) | (47) |
| NET CURRENT ASSETS | 3,518 | 3,728 |
| TOTAL NET ASSETS (All funds unrestricted) | 3,550 | 3,789 |

The Elders are grateful to the members of the Advisory Council, whose support and advice enables them to carry out their work.

Richard Branson
Virgin Unite

Holly Branson
Virgin Unite

Marieke van Schaik
Dutch Postcode Lottery

Peter Gabriel
The Peter Gabriel Trust

Mabel van Oranje
Girls Not Brides

Lulit Solomon
Jeremy Coller Foundation

Kathy Calvin
United Nations Foundation

Sally Osberg
Skoll Foundation

Amy Towers
The Nduna Foundation

Jeremy Coller
Jeremy Coller Foundation

Shannon Sedgwick Davis
Bridgeway Foundation

Jeff Towers
The Nduna Foundation

Randy Newcomb
Humanity United

Jeff Skoll
Skoll Foundation

The Elders' activities were funded through generous donations received from the following organisations and individuals:

- Bridgeway Foundation
- Chandra Jessee
- David Paradise
- Dylan Jones
- Dutch Postcode Lottery
- Humanity United
- Jeremy Coller Foundation
- Skoll Foundation
- Strive Masiyiwa
- The Nduna Foundation
- The Peter Gabriel Trust
- Virgin Unite



Kofi Annan talks to an Eritrean girl during a visit to a reception centre in Sicily, Italy in November 2017.



Gro Harlem Brundtland and Ernesto Zedillo visit a health centre in Indonesia in November 2017.



The Elders meet French President Emmanuel Macron at The Elysee Palace in Paris, France in December 2017.



Hina Jilani and Graça Machel at the launch of the #WalkTogether campaign in Cape Town in July 2017



Ernesto Zedillo and Mary Robinson discuss peace with Shamil Idriss (Search for Common Ground) and former child soldier Emmanuel Jal at "We The Future" event in New York in September 2017



Lakhdar Brahimi addresses the annual Youth & Leaders Summit at Science Po in Paris in January 2017.



Graça Machel (left) during a visit to rural Tanzania in July 2017.

“The Elders can speak freely and boldly,
working both publicly and behind the scenes.

They will reach out to those who
most need their help.

They will support courage where there is fear,
foster agreement where there is conflict and
inspire hope where there is despair.”

Nelson Mandela 2007

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