

## The Elders demand urgent climate action at G20 summit

**LONDON, 30 November 2018**

Failure by G20 countries to take decisive, long-overdue action to cut emissions and end fossil fuel subsidies would be a global betrayal that threatens irreversible climate catastrophe, The Elders warned today.

They noted that it is nearly a decade since the G20 nations first committed to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies in 2009. Doing so would reduce global carbon emissions by 10 percent by 2030, but progress towards this goal has remained slow and insufficient.

Ahead of the COP24 climate conference in Katowice, Poland, The Elders urged the G20 leaders meeting in Buenos Aires to seize the moment, heed the increasingly dire scientific, health and economic warnings, and move from talk to action.

They commended the recent Virtual Summit hosted by the Climate Vulnerable Forum on 22 November, in particular the new Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) submitted by the Marshall Islands.

The Virtual Summit showed that small states most exposed to climate change are acting with urgency and innovation to develop sustainable, just and inclusive responses. The rich industrial countries of the G20 must now follow suit.

[Mary Robinson](#), Chair of The Elders, said:

*“The time for talking is over. It is morally, politically and economically illiterate to debate, deny or downplay climate change. The science is clear; we have a dozen years at most to cut emissions by 45 percent, so that global temperature rises can be kept to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The G20 must play a decisive role, while further delay would be unconscionable.”*

The Elders noted the recent report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) that nations need to triple their efforts just to meet the target of keeping temperature rises to 2 degrees, let alone the 1.5 degrees target.

They also highlighted the latest warnings by a US government report that unmitigated climate change could knock off 10 percent from the US economy by 2100, and a new report by medical journal The Lancet that infectious diseases such as dengue fever have spread with greater virulence and frequency in line with global temperature rises.

[Ban Ki-moon](#), Deputy Chair of The Elders and former UN Secretary-General, said:

*“The G20 is a significant group of powerful global economies with great potential to help the world meet its commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement. But over the past decade, countries have not delivered on their commitments made at previous summits. Further failure now would be a slap in the face to the peoples of the world who desperately need urgent action.”*

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

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

[Kofi Annan](#) (1938-2018) was a founding member of The Elders and served as Chair from 2013 to 2018.

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