

The Elders welcome China's commitment to multilateralism and dialogue on rights and development, following meeting with President Xi Jinping

BEIJING, 3 April 2019

"China has a unique responsibility and profound opportunity to promote and defend international dialogue and cooperation. We are encouraged by its continued commitment to multilateralism at a time of global instability." – Mary Robinson

[Mary Robinson](#), [Ban Ki-moon](#), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Ricardo Lagos](#) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#) were in Beijing to meet with the President of China, His Excellency **Xi Jinping** and other senior leaders. This Elders mission to China included high-level discussions on multilateralism, climate change and development, nuclear rearmament and non-proliferation, and human rights, alongside a 'town-hall' meeting with students of the China Foreign Affairs University.

The Elders had open and wide-ranging discussions with President Xi, where he reaffirmed China's commitment to multilateralism and the importance of a strong and functional United Nations.

Although The Elders acknowledged China's unprecedented international cooperation – including the Belt and Road Initiative - they also expressed hope that China will step up its efforts to make that cooperation consistent with the development needs, and financial and environmental sustainability of partner countries.

Given the urgency of fully implementing the Paris Agreement, and the disengagement of some countries, The Elders appealed to China to enhance its commitment to tackling climate change.

President Xi reiterated China's support for the Paris Agreement and a firm commitment to meet its obligations on climate change.

[Ban Ki-moon](#), Deputy Chair of The Elders, said:

"China has shown a clear desire to fulfil its commitments under the Paris Agreement, and play a central role in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. At a time when international cooperation is faltering, this is welcome news."

President Xi expressed agreement on the dangers of nuclear rearmament and proliferation – asserting that there can be no winner from a conflict between major global powers. The Elders

hope all permanent members of the UN Security Council share these concerns, and support their calls for a new nuclear “minimisation” agendaⁱ.

[Ernesto Zedillo](#), Elder and former President of Mexico, said:

“These discussions clearly underlined how recent actions by some nuclear powers threaten to reverse the progress achieved on nuclear disarmament since the Cold War. We ask President Xi to use his influence to help limit any further deterioration of international agreements on the development and deployment of nuclear weapons.”

In response to questions from the Chair of The Elders, Mary Robinson, President Xi said he was open to dialogue on issues of human rights and welcomed the idea of continuing these discussions with The Elders in the future.

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

“China has made tremendous strides in freeing millions of people from the injustices of poverty. We hope that same determination to improve human rights can apply to all people throughout China. We look forward to continuing discussions on how to enhance international cooperation on global peace, security and prosperity.”

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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](#), [Zeid Raad Al Hussein](#), [Hina Jilani](#), [Ellen Johnson Sirleaf](#), [Ricardo Lagos](#), [Graça Machel](#) (Deputy Chair), [Juan Manuel Santos](#), [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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For biographies of the Elders, blogs, photos, videos and more information about their work please go to www.theElders.org.

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ⁱ The Elders advocate a “minimisation” agenda to further the cause of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. This is made up of four key components:

1. **Doctrine:** every nuclear state should make an unequivocal “No First Use” declaration
2. **De-alerting:** almost all warheads should be taken off high alert status
3. **Deployment:** substantially reduce the one-quarter of all nuclear warheads that are currently operationally deployed
4. **Decrease:** dramatically cut the number of nuclear weapons in existence

Full details can be found here:

<https://theelders.org/sites/default/files/The%20Elders%20Report%20Nuclear%20Position%20Paper%20A5%20Web.pdf>