

The Elders urge a revival of multilateralism on UN's anniversary to reshape the world after COVID-19

LONDON, 26 June 2020

The Elders today called on world leaders to recommit to the values of the UN Charter and strengthen the effectiveness of the multilateral system as the best way of overcoming existential threats like pandemics, climate change and nuclear proliferation.

On the seventy-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, The Elders launched a new report on the threats facing multilateralism in an era of populist nationalism and a growing lack of trust in the institutions of global governance.

[*"Hope for a sea-change: Why multilateralism must reshape the world after COVID-19"*](#) contains five calls to action for global leaders:

- Recommit to the values of the UN Charter;
- Empower the UN to fulfil its mandate for collective action on peace and security;
- Strengthen health systems to tackle COVID-19 and prepare for future pandemics;
- Show greater ambition on climate change to meet the Paris Agreement targets;
- Mobilise support for the entirety of the Sustainable Development Goals.

[Mary Robinson](#), former President of Ireland and Chair of The Elders, said:

"An effective, rules-based multilateral system is the world's insurance policy against existential threats from pandemics to climate change and nuclear weapons, and we now know the awful cost of failing to provide comprehensive cover. The hard months and years ahead will require determined and principled leadership. Multilateralism is not an option: it is the only path that can deliver a green, sustainable and equitable recovery."

Despite COVID-19 forcing the cancellation or postponement of many high-level physical events including the UN General Assembly in September and the COP 26 climate summit in November, The Elders urged all stakeholders to take proactive steps to maintain dialogue and coordinated action at this critical time.

They reiterated their call to G20 leaders for immediate, coordinated action and financial commitments to address the public health and economic crises sparked by the pandemic,

including \$150 billion in support of African and other developing countries to bolster their health systems and social safety nets, and tackle unsustainable levels of debt.

The Elders said that all nations need to recognise that effective multilateralism is in all their interests regardless of size or strength, offering amplification and protection to the weak, and a less costly whilst more reliable means of influencing global trends for the strong.

States should ensure that the multilateral system is adequately funded, resourced and respected to operate efficiently, at scale and in harmony with universal human rights in the years and decades ahead.

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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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