

The world remains dangerously off track on climate, The Elders warn ahead of critical UN assessment

LONDON, 26 February 2021

The Elders have voiced grave concern about the lack of ambition from many world leaders, as the UN reports back on carbon commitments ahead of the crucial COP26 climate summit in Glasgow this November.

Despite growing momentum for drastic action, many major economies have yet to submit their national carbon reduction pledges to the UN's climate body (UNFCCC), or have put forward commitments that woefully fail to deliver.

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

"Whilst the EU and the UK deserve praise for going bold and going early on climate pledges, the most impressive climate leadership has come from vulnerable countries like Rwanda and Jamaica who have put forward plans that deserve both emulation and investment.

"Major economies need to ramp up their ambition - starting with the US, where expectations are high for an emissions and finance pledge to make up for lost time. Others like Japan, Canada, Korea, New Zealand and China, have committed to net zero goals by mid-century, but we are still missing their promised new near-term plans to get there.

"Similarly, it's not enough for Australia's Prime Minister to repackage a plan that was already inadequate five years ago. The good news is there is still time for radical improvement if Australia wants to keep pace with their major allies and trading partners."

All countries are expected to strengthen their climate contributions ahead of COP26 in Glasgow. The UNFCCC Synthesis Report, due to be published on 26 February, will be the first stock-take of ambition before COP and will highlight the need for greater leadership if the world is to meet the targets of the Paris Climate Agreement.

[Juan Manuel Santos](#), former President of Colombia and member of The Elders said:

"Vulnerable communities across the world are already bearing the brunt of climate breakdown, and our leaders must take bold action to protect them. Every fraction of a degree of warming matters, and we need ambitious, courageous leadership to tackle this urgent crisis.

“The UNFCCC reports encouraging climate commitments from countries such as Colombia and Peru; but others such as Mexico and Brazil are showing little ambition and even taking retrograde action. The Elders urge all world leaders to realise the emergency at hand and take the commensurate action.”

Notes to editors

1. The first iteration of the [UNFCCC’s Synthesis Report](#) will be published on 26 February 2021, and will assess the collective impact of all Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) received by the official deadline of 31st December 2020. A second iteration will be published closer to COP26 in Glasgow.

2. According to Climate Action Tracker and the [Climate Vulnerable Forum](#), two-thirds of the major economies in the G20 have not yet strengthened their emissions commitments. Although Australia, Russia, Mexico and Brazil have submitted updated plans, these do not yet include stronger emission reduction targets. The new US Administration has committed to strengthen its NDC by 22 April 2021.

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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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