

The Elders to address the global ‘state of hope’ in a week of activity to mark Mandela Day

LONDON, 6 July 2021

From 12 July, The Elders will bring together high-profile voices from across the world to launch a major new initiative to consider the *State of Hope* in these unprecedented times.

In a week-long series of exclusive online talks released each day in the run-up to Nelson Mandela Day on 18 July 2021, members of The Elders will reflect on Mandela’s legacy, examine its relevance to today’s challenges, and recall the personal impact he had on their own lives.

Mary Robinson, Graça Machel, Ban Ki-moon and other members of The Elders will explore the example of Mandela’s leadership, how his political philosophy can help address today’s global challenges, and where hope can be found in the struggle for peace, justice, and human rights.

They will tackle some of the most intractable problems we face; outlining the severity of the challenges, but also, crucially, identifying where hope and potential solutions can be found. Issues to be covered by the Elders include:

- Mary Robinson – former President of Ireland and Chair of the Elders on the shared challenges of **climate change, nuclear conflict and an equitable global recovery** from COVID-19
- Zeid Raad Al Hussein – former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the global **fight to defend and promote human rights** in the face of growing authoritarianism
- Hina Jilani – pioneering lawyer and justice advocate on why **people power and a vibrant civil society** are vital to building back a better world
- Juan Manuel Santos – former President of Colombia and Nobel Peace laureate on the **power of forgiveness and reconciliation** in the struggle to overcome conflict.

Talks by the Elders will be released daily on a dedicated website (StateOfHope.Live) from Monday 12 July. They will be complemented by video responses from high-profile figures in politics, science and activism; including: Nobel Peace laureate and child rights campaigner, **Malala Yousafazi**; former UK Prime Minister, **Gordon Brown**; Ugandan climate activist, **Vanessa Nakate**; and former NASA astronaut, **Colonel Chris Hadfield**.

The Elders are also encouraging the public to get involved too by sharing their thoughts on social media with #StateOfHope and by joining members of The Elders for a live online event on 16 July.

The event is free to join and gives people around the world the opportunity to further explore the issues, take part in the *State of Hope* poll, and submit a question for the live discussion. To take part, visit [StateOfHope.Live](https://www.stateofhope.org)

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

“The Elders’ State of Hope is about taking a moment as the world moves on to the next stage of the pandemic to ask: what are the biggest challenges we face? How did they come about? And crucially, what hope is there of addressing them? The world needs hope, now, more than ever.

“We want the State of Hope to spark a wider discussion about the interconnectedness of our shared challenges and the solidarity, empathy and resilience needed to address them.”

[Graça Machel](#), Deputy Chair of The Elders said:

“When Nelson Mandela founded The Elders on 18 July 2007, he called on us to ‘support courage where there is fear and inspire hope where there is despair’. The Elders’ State of Hope is an opportunity to realise Madiba’s vision as we prepare to mark what would have been his 103rd birthday.

“Courage is what is needed to address the pernicious challenges to peace, justice and human rights that we see across the world; and the demonstration of that courage is the greatest source of hope we have.”

ENDS

Media enquiries

William French, Head of Communications
T: +44 (0) 7795 693903

media@theElders.org

Sign up to [receive The Elders' press releases](#).

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.

Find out more

For biographies of the Elders, blogs, photos, videos and more information about their work please go to <https://theelders.org/>.

Follow The Elders on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Flickr](#) and [YouTube](#).