

The Elders call for global resolve and solidarity in fight against Covid-19

LONDON, 18 March 2020

The Elders today call on global leaders and citizens alike to root their response to the Covid-19 pandemic in humanitarian principles and solidarity to save lives, defend rights and protect the most vulnerable groups in society.

The pandemic poses an unprecedented challenge for governments, heads of state and international institutions. As former leaders, we acknowledge the fearsomely complex political, moral and economic decisions those currently in office will have to take over the coming weeks and months.

We endorse the call of the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board for at least US\$ 8 billion to be immediately injected into critical funding gaps to support the WHO's emergency response, vaccine development, timely distribution of medical supplies and other critical measures

The G7 statement of 16 March 2020 marks a welcome first step, with leaders pledging to do *"whatever is necessary to ensure a strong global response through closer cooperation and enhanced coordination of our efforts"*. This approach should be followed by all governments, supranational bodies and business leaders.

Covid-19 shines a light on our common humanity and shared vulnerabilities, and it is only through a collective, collaborative response that all our fundamental interests can be served.

The rapid spread of the pandemic highlights the interconnectedness of today's globalised world, and the need for a fully-functioning multilateral system that can oversee a comprehensive public health response based on the principles of justice and equity.

Developed countries and multilateral institutions should also coordinate measures to support other less-developed and poorer states whose health systems and wider socio-economic structures risk being overwhelmed if the pandemic continues unchecked.

Politicians, policymakers and media organisations also have a responsibility to vigorously rebut false information spread with malicious intent at this time of global crisis.

Sharing information and changes in public policy and health advice in a timely, transparent and accessible way should be at the heart of every government's communications strategy.

We urge everyone to follow the World Health Organization's advice on personal hygiene measures such as regular hand-washing, covering ones mouth when sneezing or coughing, and staying at home if any covid-19 symptoms are suspected.

Everyone can make a difference, and everyone has a responsibility to do their part. Only by asserting the common bonds of our humanity and our shared investment in sustainable policy responses can the pandemic be overcome.

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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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