



The
Elders



Reflecting the past,
facing the future

The challenge of ethical leadership

Annual Report 2015



Photo: Ander McIntyre

The Elders are a group of independent leaders, brought together by Nelson Mandela in 2007, who use their collective experience and influence for peace, justice and human rights worldwide.

For biographies of the individual Elders, blogs, photos, videos and more information about their work please go to www.theElders.org.

Follow The Elders:

-  www.facebook.com/theelders
-  www.twitter.com/theelders
-  www.flickr.com/photos/theelders
-  www.youtube.com/user/theeldersorg

The Elders:

- Kofi Annan**, Chair
- Gro Harlem Brundtland**, Deputy Chair
- Martti Ahtisaari**
- Ela Bhatt**
- Lakhdar Brahimi**
- Fernando Henrique Cardoso**
- Jimmy Carter**
- Hina Jilani**
- Graça Machel**
- Mary Robinson**
- Ernesto Zedillo**
- Desmond Tutu**, Honorary Elder



Photo: Grigory Sysoev

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

“The international community has yet to demonstrate it really has the conviction to address the root causes of conflicts and defend human rights.”

Kofi Annan

Reflecting on 2015 and surveying the year ahead, the words of the Irish poet William Butler Yeats come to my mind:

“The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity”

Yeats was writing nearly a century ago, but his words provide an alarmingly prescient prism through which to view today’s world.

In 2015, we have seen the scourge of terrorism, the agonies of Syria’s civil war and the barbarities of Da’esh/ Islamic State, and the sexist violence of Boko Haram in Nigeria – all vivid examples of the *“passionate intensity”* of the worst aspects of humanity. Equally, the international community has yet to demonstrate it really has the conviction to address the root causes of conflicts and defend human rights.

War, instability and a lack of responsible governance across a swathe of countries from sub-Saharan Africa to the Middle East has forced over a million people to flee and risk their lives in perilous crossings to Europe.

As an African, it grieves me that my own continent is the locus of so many conflicts and tensions. This is compounded by a worrying trend towards authoritarianism, a disregard for constitutional law and the persistent blight of corruption, leaving African societies ill-placed to exploit the potential for growth afforded by clean energy, sustainable agriculture and digital technologies.

All refugees and migrants are entitled to be treated with dignity in accordance with international law. This has not always been the case. The lack of a comprehensive and fair asylum and migration policy across the European Union has compounded refugees’ misery, leaving many in legal limbo, destitution or detention.

At the same time, the unprecedented levels of migration have prompted some ugly reactions in Europe itself. This is not to dismiss the positive leadership shown by, for example, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, or the

countless acts of kindness from ordinary citizens across the continent. But extremist political forces always exploit such moments to peddle their doctrines of hate and intolerance, especially when Europe’s economy remains weak and unemployment levels high.

It is particularly alarming that the mature societies of Western Europe and the United States appear just as vulnerable to these siren songs as more recent democratic states. Leaders must show responsible judgement and respect for human rights and ethical values, rather than reaching for scapegoats and short-term solutions.

However, Yeats’s prism of *“mere anarchy loosed upon the world”* is only one way to view the last twelve months. We should also recall the substantial progress and successes secured towards a fairer and freer world.

The Paris Agreement on climate change is a clear example. Politicians, businesses and civil society groups have all acknowledged their responsibilities, but citizens will be the ones to hold their leaders to account.

The same applies to the new Sustainable Development Goals which were agreed in September 2015. Securing a global shift towards a truly sustainable economic model that protects rights and habitats is no mean feat, though the challenge will now be to ensure their full and fair implementation.

The Iran nuclear deal and the rapprochement between the United States and Cuba also both show that patient diplomacy and responsible leadership can yield results.

In 2016, The Elders will strive to show our own *“passionate intensity”* to secure a better world. Reflecting the past and facing the future, we will encourage the current generation of leaders to show they have the conviction to achieve positive, ethical change, heeding Nelson Mandela’s call to always *“support courage where there is fear”*.

Kofi Annan
Chair



Photo: Jeff Moore

FOREWORD FROM THE CEO

The crises we face in 2016 demand leaders who are prepared to think the unthinkable, who are not afraid to make sacrifices.

Lesley-Anne Knight

The Elders have always promoted ethical leadership as a key ingredient for developing peaceful and equitable societies. But sometimes more is required: if we are to end the chronic cycles of death and destruction that plague parts of our planet, we must have leadership that is not just ethical, but courageous too.

Significant achievements in global cooperation in 2015 provided The Elders with some cause for encouragement, albeit tempered by a deep sadness and frustration at the international community's lack of progress in bringing several devastating long-term conflicts to an end.

On the positive side, two important international processes that have been actively supported by The Elders were successfully concluded during the year. Members of The Elders were present at the United Nations in New York in September to witness the unanimous approval of the Sustainable Development Goals that will set the global development agenda up to 2030.

In the run-up to the COP21 climate conference in Paris in December, The Elders worked hard to ensure that world leaders were fully engaged in the process and realised their responsibility to future generations to secure a strong and equitable agreement. The Elders welcomed the final agreement but will continue to monitor progress in implementing the new climate change targets.

And finally, a new Elders initiative, aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations in peace-building, got off to an encouraging start following its launch at the Munich Security Conference.

Other areas of work for The Elders have shown some cause for optimism: the general election in Myanmar, the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1, and The Elders' meeting with President Vladimir Putin, as part of our ongoing P5 engagement.

But the brutal war in Syria, the refugee crisis, terrorist attacks, growing sectarian hatred, coupled with a complete stalemate in the Israel-Palestine conflict leave no room for complacency.

The crises we face in 2016 demand leaders who are prepared to think the unthinkable, who are not afraid to make sacrifices, that will risk upsetting powerful vested interests and take a bold step forward for the greater good.

History provides examples of the power of such leadership; and one that always comes to mind for The Elders is the extraordinary dialogue between their founder Nelson Mandela and President F. W. De Klerk that brought about the peaceful end of apartheid and the transition to democracy in South Africa.

The Elders continue to foster that kind of leadership wherever they can and keep the legacy of Mandela alive. But looking at the bleak prospects for peace in 2016, one can't help but ask: Where are today's Mandelas? Where are tomorrow's Elders?

Lesley-Anne Knight

Chief Executive Officer



Photo: UNHCR/Andrew McConnell



Photo: Grigory Sysoev

| CONTENTS



1	Letter from the Chair
2	Foreword from the CEO
5	Mission Narrative
6	Stronger UN
8	P5 Engagement
10	Israel-Palestine
11	Iran and Saudi Arabia
12	Syria, Refugees and Migration
13	Myanmar
14	Climate change and SDGs
16	Equality for Girls and Women
18	Financial Review
20	Administrative Information

MISSION NARRATIVE

Ethical leadership: putting our values into action

The Elders made the case throughout 2015 for genuine ethical leadership to safeguard the planet and its peoples. The **Sustainable Development Goals** and the **COP 21** climate summit were always going to be obvious moments when responsible positions were needed, but as the year developed, the refugee crisis, terrorism and growing sectarian hatred only underscored how important ethical leadership was – and yet, how seldom it was seen.

Nowhere was this more apparent than in Africa. Bad governance, conflict and corruption continued to blight the continent throughout 2015 and The Elders were particularly concerned at the potential for mass violence in **South Sudan** and **Burundi**. They issued two statements on Burundi, in March and July, in response to President Nkurunziza's bid for an unconstitutional third term in office, urging all parties to respect the spirit and letter of the Arusha Accords, brokered by Nelson Mandela, which ended Burundi's civil war in 2005.

The Elders will continue to monitor African developments in 2016 and consult closely with partners and representatives of the international community on how best they can use their collective influence to foster peace and stability.

They are concerned about the increasing global disregard for constitutionality and accountability. This weakens the social contract between the governing and governed classes, damaging long-term prospects for economic growth, social justice and sustainable prosperity. It also constrains the effectiveness of institutions such as the United Nations, which The Elders continue to believe represent the best chance of inclusive, democratic and ethical global leadership.

STRONGER UN

In 2015, The Elders launched a major new initiative aimed at strengthening the United Nations in its core responsibility for the preservation of peace and security worldwide. In recent years the UN has suffered a loss of credibility due to its failure to settle several bloody conflicts, notably current wars in Syria, South Sudan and Ukraine. Taking advantage of the UN's 70th anniversary and a flurry of reform initiatives – from governments, civil society and academic experts – which the anniversary inspired, The Elders aimed to capture the centre ground of informed public opinion with a set of pragmatic proposals. Three of these relate to the work of the Security Council, dominated as it is by its five permanent members, while the fourth proposal – nominally about the selection process for the UN Secretary-General – indirectly addresses both the power balance between the Council and the General Assembly, the supreme UN body in which all member states have an equal voice, as well as the independence of the Secretariat. With their wealth of individual and collective experience in the workings of the UN, the Elders brought authority, personal insights and legitimacy to this new area of work.



Photo: Widmann/MSC

The Elders' proposals were publicly launched at the Munich Security Conference in early February before a large audience of top government officials and parliamentarians from around the world. After the presentation, the Elders – Martti Ahtisaari, Kofi Annan, Gro Harlem Brundtland, and Graça Machel – held a series of private bilateral meetings with other delegations. An Op-Ed signed by Kofi Annan and Gro Brundtland which outlined “*Four Ideas to Save the Peace*” was published simultaneously in nine countries, in different languages.

The Elders participated in five meetings on different aspects of the subject in New York alone (three of them well-attended events at UN Headquarters). They also published blogs on The Elders' website and made a short, hard-hitting video clip to coincide with UN Day on 24 October, which attracted considerable attention from activists and the general public. In one form or another, almost every single Elder contributed to the growing public debate on this subject last year.

Partnering with other like-minded organisations and governments was a key aspect of the strategy for broad dissemination of The Elders' ideas. Among the



Photo: Neville Elder



The UN is a vital part of our global security and governance infrastructure but it has to change – its present arrangements are neither normal nor reasonable.

Gro Harlem Brundtland

UN Photo/Mark Garten

NGOs and think-tanks we worked closely with were the International Peace Institute (IPI), the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and the UN Association of the United Kingdom (UNA-UK). The ACT group – an alliance of 27 small and medium-sized states, including Switzerland, Finland, Liechtenstein and Costa Rica – was also a solid partner on several occasions. Mary Robinson spoke at a packed event at the UN organised by Switzerland in June; three months later, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Ernesto Zedillo shared a platform there with the Costa Rican President and Estonian Foreign Minister. Together with Liechtenstein, a close ally for this initiative, in early September, The Elders convened a private meeting in Vaduz of active and retired senior officials with first-hand knowledge of the Security Council. The subsequent report was disseminated in New York to all UN delegations in September and was later the subject of a meeting at the UN Headquarters at which Lakhdar Brahimi spoke.

Another valuable partner, especially with respect to the Elders' call to open up the process of choosing the next Secretary-General and change his or her period in office to a single, longer term, was the current President of

the General Assembly, Mogens Lykketoft of Denmark. On behalf of The Elders, Lakhdar Brahimi attended a private retreat he organised in January to consider the challenges facing the next Secretary-General. He and Martti Ahtisaari took part in a similar event at Sciences Po, in Paris, later in January. For their part, Gro Brundtland and Hina Jilani were speakers at an event at the historic Guildhall in London organised by the UNA-UK in October.

It is clear that The Elders have acted as a catalyst for intergovernmental action at the UN with respect to the Secretary-General selection process. Their leadership has been frequently cited by civil society activists in this and other areas of proposed reform such as restraint by the five permanent members of the Security Council in the use of their veto powers in cases of mass atrocities and expansion of the Council to bring in new semi-permanent members. This last proposal is aimed at breaking the deadlock of the past two decades in intergovernmental negotiations at the UN which has stymied progress towards making the Council more democratic and representative of today's world. In the coming year, The Elders aim to build on the solid achievements of 2015 under this initiative.

P5 ENGAGEMENT

In light of the ongoing Eastern Ukraine conflict and the critical role Russia is playing in the Syrian civil war as a key supporter of President Assad, the Elders determined that they should pay a visit to Moscow as early as possible in 2015 to meet the Russian leadership. The visit marked the next step in the organisation's "P5 Engagement" initiative, aimed to promote greater coordination among the permanent members of the UN Security Council. Elders have previously visited Washington, London and Paris for meetings with high-level government officials in each country.

A preliminary meeting with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, on the margins of the Munich Security Conference in early February, led to an invitation to meet President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on 29 April. An unusually large delegation of six Elders led by the Chair, Kofi Annan, and including Jimmy Carter, Martti Ahtisaari, Lakhdar Brahimi, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Ernesto Zedillo, spent three days in the Russian capital meeting top officials – past and present – and discussing the main issues of the day. Apart from the President and the Foreign Minister, among others the



Photo: Grigory Sysyoev

Elders held in-depth talks with were former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and former Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, then still an influential figure but who has subsequently sadly passed away.

The situation in Eastern Ukraine was naturally a main focus of attention, as the Elders' visit came soon after the Minsk II agreement had attempted to bring the fighting to a halt. So, too, were the Iranian nuclear talks with the P5+1 group of major states and efforts to end the war in Syria. Briefer mention was made in meetings of climate change, ahead of the COP21 meeting in Paris, and *The Elders' UN initiative*.

Following the visit, Elders made private calls to brief concerned officials in other capitals. This was a relatively low-profile visit for The Elders in public terms but it did attract considerable interest from Russian and international media, and Kofi Annan gave an interview to *Russia Today's* English-language TV news channel. Importantly, it succeeded in opening a valuable channel to the highest level of the Russian Government which will hopefully prove its worth in future.



Photo: Grigory Sysyoev

To be successful in defusing conflicts and building trust, high-level dialogue and effective action are essential.

Kofi Annan

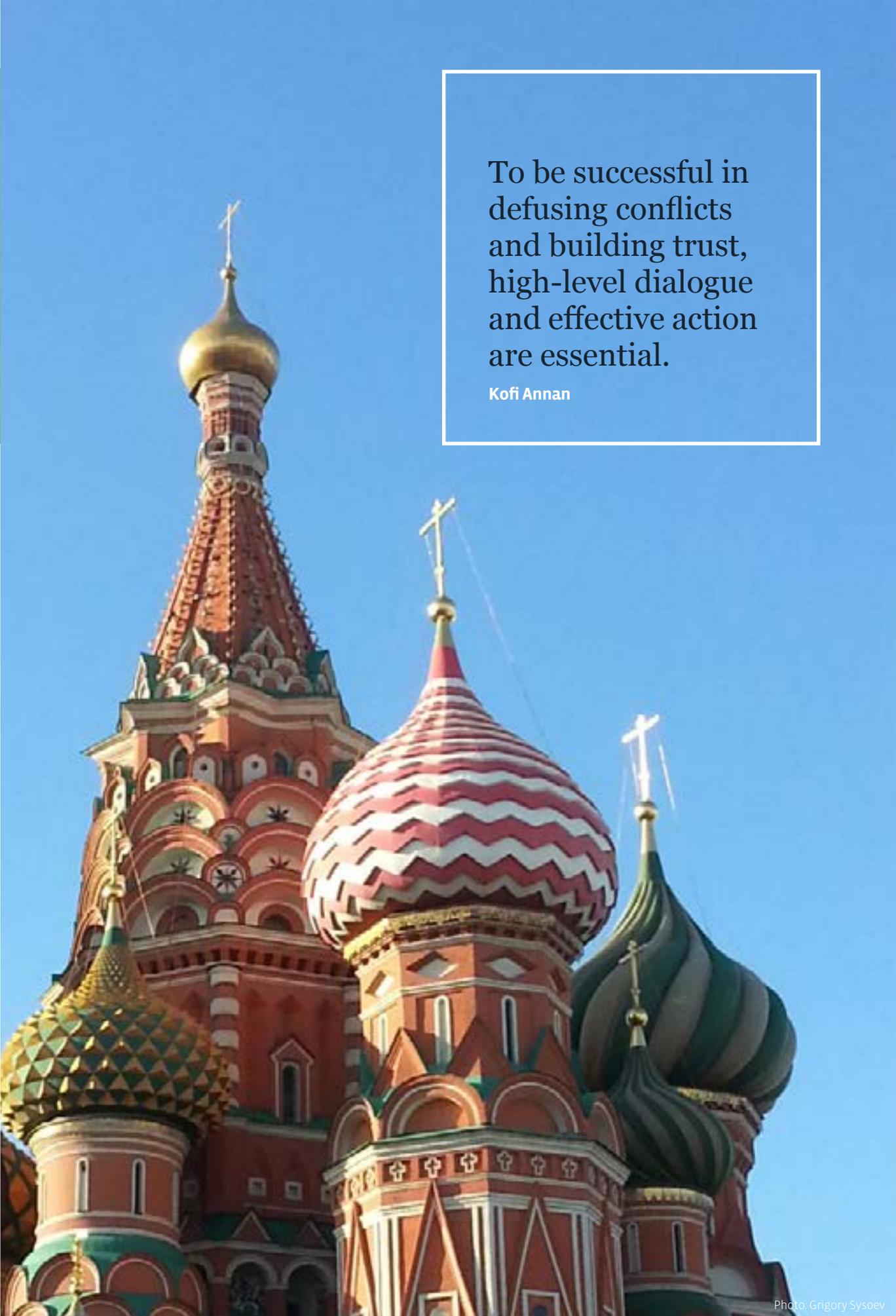


Photo: Grigory Sysoev

MIDDLE EAST ISRAEL-PALESTINE

In the last months of 2015, the people of Israel and Palestine were once more subjected to increasing levels of violence. It was a dismal year with no progress towards a solution to the long conflict between these two peoples who, for the most part, still hope to exist in peace and security side by side on the same small area of land.

During the year, The Elders took Gaza as their main focus, in recognition of the slow pace of reconstruction and desperate conditions in the enclave since a blockade was enforced in 2007, worsened by the summer war of 2014. Gaza was intended to be the high point of a return visit by The Elders to Israel and Palestine, the organisation's first since October 2012. Unfortunately, the Gaza leg of the visit by Jimmy Carter and Gro Harlem Brundtland from 29 April to 2 May had to be cancelled at the last minute for security reasons.

The cancellation became a news story in itself, drawing attention to the dire situation in Gaza, not least in the well-attended press conference, interviews and media coverage at the end of the trip. Gro Harlem Brundtland and Jimmy Carter had op-eds on Gaza published in *The Washington Post*, *Foreign Policy* and *Haaretz*.



Photo: Muath Khatib



Photo: Muath Khatib

The Elders did however get as near as Kibbutz Nir Am in southern Israel, a very short distance from the Gaza fence, to hear the views of its residents. Their desire for peace and for renewed connection with the people of Gaza was heartening.

During their trip, the two Elders made a point of meeting senior Israeli figures in favour of the two-state solution, including Knesset member Hilik Bar. They also discussed prospects for reunification of Gaza and the West Bank with Palestinian President Abbas and other high-ranking officials from Fatah and other factions.

In addition, The Elders' website and Facebook pages featured articles from distinguished former and current Israeli and Palestinian politicians – Shlomo Ben Ami, Salam Fayyad, Mustafa Barghouthi – blogs from academics and The Elders' staff, and lively contributions on Gaza and other issues from human rights activists from Israel, Palestine and elsewhere.

Notwithstanding widespread scepticism about its prospects and the failure of the latest US initiative to further peace negotiations, The Elders maintained their focus on the two-state outcome as the fairest solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. They will continue to encourage further bilateral recognition of Palestine as a state, in the belief that international pressure on Israel is required for progress to be made, and to support embattled human rights defenders and civil society in both Israel and Palestine.



Photo: Morteza Nikoubazi

MIDDLE EAST IRAN & SAUDI ARABIA

The Elders have paid close attention to the region-wide confrontation between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the two rival powers of the Persian Gulf region, for several years now. It was a central subject of discussion during an Elders' visit to Tehran in January 2014 and continued to be a major talking point for quiet Elders' diplomacy in 2015. The unwelcome developments of early 2016, resulting in broken diplomatic relations and heightened mutual rhetoric, augur badly; this rivalry, which has had negative consequences in much of the Middle East, will therefore remain a focus of The Elders' work.

The second theme of The Elders' work on Iran and regional security related to the on-going nuclear negotiations between the six major powers known as the P5+1 and Iran. The Elders have been strong supporters, publicly and privately, of a binding agreement that met all sides' needs. During the course of 2015, the Elders issued several supportive statements, highlighting the need for equity and the full and effective implementation of the Joint Plan of Action agreed in Vienna in July.

MIDDLE EAST SYRIA, REFUGEES AND MIGRATION

In 2015, The Elders' principal approach to the complex conflict in Syria and Iraq was to concentrate on one of its consequences: refugees – from Syria but also in the wider global context.

As the refugee crisis grew, especially in Europe, The Elders called on EU leaders to show compassion and to commit to equal burden-sharing by member states. To mark World Refugee Day on 20 June, Martti Ahtisaari, himself a refugee as a child, wrote powerfully about what he called the crisis of inaction. The Elders also produced a video – featuring Kofi Annan, Lakhdar Brahimi and Mary Robinson – on the worsening plight of refugees. They called for empathy from leaders and reminded them of their obligations under international law. Martti Ahtisaari spoke publicly again about the need for greater compassion for refugees at the UK launch of his biography, *The Mediator*, in September.

The issue was one of those discussed in a televised "Elders' Debate" on *BBC World* in June. Kofi Annan, Jimmy Carter, Hina Jilani and Mary Robinson fielded questions from social media and from a studio audience of young people from around the world.

UNHCR/Christopher Herwig



Lakhdar Brahimi and Mary Robinson were among the Elders interviewed on other national TV stations on the subject during the year.

During their board meeting in Evian, France, in late October, three Elders participated in a very well-attended, and widely reported, public event at the Graduate Institute for International and Development Studies in nearby Geneva. The theme of the evening was "*Lessons from the Syrian Refugee Crisis: Towards New Global Coordination*". Kofi Annan, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Hina Jilani took part in the panel, accompanied by Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration.

A strong message to come out of the event was to urge "*European leaders [to] demonstrate political courage and treat their electorates with honesty and respect to effectively manage the current refugee crisis*". This message remains just as pertinent in 2016 and will be reiterated by The Elders in all their work on the issue throughout the year.



Photo: Jeff Moore

I MYANMAR

After two busy preceding years, The Elders decided to take a low-key approach to their work on Myanmar in 2015 – a crucial year for the country’s democratic transition in light of the general elections scheduled for November – and focus on research and quiet diplomacy. The Elders’ staff continued to monitor the situation closely, in particular with respect to the peace process with Myanmar’s ethnic armed groups and the Rohingya Muslim minority. The plight of thousands of stranded boat people, most of them Rohingya looking to escape dire conditions in Rakhine state and seek work elsewhere, made headlines worldwide in May. Kofi Annan, as Chair, wrote privately to President Thein Sein on this subject and on other topical matters that month.

Although Jimmy Carter was unable to lead The Carter Center’s election monitoring mission to Myanmar in October and November, due to ill health, he invited his fellow Elder Mary Robinson to be a co-leader of the team of monitors. They and other independent observers pronounced these historic elections to be largely free and fair. Although not without flaws, including the unwarranted disenfranchisement of the Rohingya, The Elders were deeply impressed by the conduct of the election campaign and the enthusiasm with which such large numbers voted for change, in the form of Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for



Photo: Mark Baker

Democracy, after decades of military or semi-military rule. A congratulatory letter was sent to her after the elections. An op-ed welcoming the peaceful outcome of the election by Gro Harlem Brundtland and Martti Ahtisaari was published in *The Myanmar Times* in both its English and Burmese editions.

In December, a senior staff team from The Elders and Crisis Management Initiative – the organisation founded by Elder Martti Ahtisaari – conducted a 10-day visit to northern Thailand and Myanmar. The team first met ethnic political and military leaders from groups which signed a National Ceasefire Accord in October as well as those who declined to do so. Then they travelled to Naypyitaw to consult with senior officials from the outgoing Thein Sein government as well as the Tatmadaw, Myanmar’s armed forces. While the political transition to a new NLD-led government has gone smoother than anticipated, The Elders will remain actively engaged.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In 2015, the world's community of nations concluded two of the most important international processes of our times: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed unanimously at the UN in September; and the new international climate change agreement finalised in Paris in December.

The Elders followed closely the negotiation of these historic agreements, seeking to increase world leaders' levels of engagement and ambition and to link the development and climate agendas.

In May, recognising the importance of India in securing a strong climate deal, Ela Bhatt wrote an op-ed in the *Huffington Post* and Indian newspaper *Prabhat Khabar* urging the government in New Delhi to commit to meaningful carbon emission reductions and a more holistic growth policy that incorporates environmental protection.

In early September, concerned at the slow progress of the international climate negotiations, The Elders wrote to all heads of state and government, urging them to be "a historic generation of leaders who will have a profound and positive impact that echoes through the century".

The letter was reported on in *The Guardian* and widely distributed through social media. "Digital diplomacy" was used to promote its recommendations, for example to EU environment ministers.

Photo: Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice



During the SDG Summit in September, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Graça Machel and Hina Jilani met leaders from Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. This was to show solidarity and provide support to leaders from countries actively engaged in the Paris negotiations and which stand to lose most from climate change.

A further letter was sent to G20 leaders ahead of their November summit. With critical issues still unresolved at this late stage, they wrote: "Time and leadership are of the essence...Your engagement as a G20 leader is thus crucial in reaching a strong, inclusive and equitable agreement at Paris."

At the Paris climate conference itself in December, Mary Robinson was fully engaged throughout in her role as UN Special Envoy on Climate Change, earning international plaudits for her tireless efforts to secure a strong and equitable international agreement that promotes human rights and gender equality. Elders Gro Harlem Brundtland and Ela Bhatt spoke at civil society, business and UN events around the conference in support of a just and ambitious deal.

A dozen items on climate change – guest blogs and Elders' opinion pieces – were published over the course of the year. Guest bloggers from countries most affected by climate change, for example the Philippines and the Pacific Islands, drew attention to the human costs and underlined that climate change is a justice issue, with those least responsible for causing it most affected by the impacts.

In many homes, women are at the heart of the household's nexus of water, food, and energy – and thus often know first-hand about the challenges and potential solutions in these areas.

Mary Robinson

Photo: UN Photo/Mark Garten

The Elders applauded the final conclusion of the COP 21 summit but noted that the hard work of implementation is yet to come. Reflecting on this, Kofi Annan wrote: *“The Paris climate agreement is not the end but the beginning of the road. The world has rallied around clear targets that now need to be implemented to avoid a looming climate catastrophe.”*

The Elders will continue to work on climate change and development issues, consolidating the achievements of 2015 and campaigning for ever-greater ambition to truly secure a just, prosperous and healthy planet for future generations.



Photo: Neville Elder

EQUALITY FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN

The Elders have been passionate supporters of equality for girls and women since the organisation's inception and this continued commitment informed all aspects of their work throughout 2015. This was an important year in the fight for full female emancipation, marking both the twentieth anniversary of the landmark Beijing Women's Conference in 1995, and the adoption of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals which include explicit reference to gender equality.

In January 2015, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Hina Jilani attended the World Woman Summit in Oslo, where they discussed their personal experience to illustrate the power and potential of women as change-makers.

On the occasion of International Women's Day (8 March), Desmond Tutu and Graça Machel conducted a live Twitter Q&A on women's rights and gender equality. This drew a lively response from a global online audience. On the same day, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Jimmy Carter attended the Nobel Peace Forum in Minneapolis, as speakers and panelists. The event was an important opportunity for the Elders to discuss key themes of Jimmy Carter's book *"A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power"*.



The Elders strongly supported the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals at the United Nations summit in New York in September, especially Goal 5 with its specific commitment to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

The importance of women's inclusion in the politics of climate change was a key message when The Elders attended the COP 21 summit. Mary Robinson and Gro Harlem Brundtland both highlighted the critical role women must play in tackling climate change and bolstering communities' resilience. Gender equality is a key component of climate justice – a point The Elders emphasised in their pre-summit letters to heads of state and government.

The Elders will continue to campaign for the rights of girls and women and an end to all forms of discrimination throughout 2016 in international fora and through grassroots engagement and dialogue with young people who will carry the flame of equality for future generations.

Women's participation and representation is an integral part of the development process.

Ela Bhatt



Photo: UNHCR/Saiful Huq Omi

FINANCIAL REVIEW

FOR THE YEAR TO
31 DECEMBER 2015

The Elders' activities in 2015 and 2014 were funded through generous voluntary donations received from the following organisations and individuals:

- Better World Fund
- Bridgeway Foundation
- Chandra Jessee
- Dutch Postcode Lottery
- Humanity United
- Jeremy Collier Foundation
- Skoll Foundation
- Swedish Postcode Foundation
- The Nduna Foundation
- The Peter Gabriel Trust
- The Quadrio Curzio Family Trust
- Virgin Unite

The Elders' unrestricted voluntary income for the year was £4.1 million (2014: £3.2 million), an increase of £0.9 million on the prior year. The increase in funding year-on-year was due to a one-time contribution of approximately £1.0 million received during 2015; this was intended to rebuild reserves and stabilise the financial position of The Elders up to the end of the current four-year strategic plan in 2017.

Our costs relate primarily to the delivery of a global programme of activities agreed by the Elders at their biannual board meetings, through the work of a London-based secretariat in support of the Elders. The London office provides the Elders with policy research, conducts advocacy and communications work, and is responsible for logistics and general administration. During 2015 we spent £2.4 million (2014: £3.1 million), a decrease of £0.7 million or 22% on the prior year. The reduction of costs year on year reflects



the varying nature of expenditure resulting from different levels of engagement as needed year on year and the long term nature of our various initiatives.

The net result for the year was a surplus of £1.7 million (2014: £0.2 million).

We ended 2015 with total unrestricted reserves of £3.4 million (2014: £1.7 million), representing approximately fifteen months' expenditure. The Elders has a reserves policy of retaining nine months expenditure to enable good financial management and planning over time. This level of reserves is considered necessary by the Board given the concentration of funders that we currently have. All the charity's reserves are unrestricted.

The year-end excess of reserves above our long term policy position is due to the particular point in time, i.e. 2015 being a year with a higher than usual surplus post receipt of some one-time funding intended to rebuild and stabilise the financial position of the charity, as well as a reduction in costs due to activity levels for the year. We anticipate a shortfall of income over expenditure for 2016 and the resulting deficit for the coming year to bring reserves back closer to our policy target of nine months' reserves.

The following financial information does not constitute the company's statutory accounts, but is extracted therefrom. The statutory accounts dealing with the 2015 financial year have been delivered to Companies House and the Charity Commission. The auditor's report made on the company's statutory accounts for the year was unqualified and did not include a reference to any matters to which the auditor drew attention by way of emphasis.

THE ELDERS FOUNDATION
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
 (INCORPORATING THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

	2015	2014
	£000	£000
INCOME FROM:		
Donations and grants	4,123	3,247
Interest income	5	-
TOTAL INCOME	4,128	3,247
EXPENDITURE ON:		
Costs of generating funds	99	94
Charitable activities		
Ethical Leadership & Elders & Youngers	100	155
Africa	222	374
P5 Engagement & Strengthening of the UN	598	365
Middle East	475	591
Myanmar	325	687
Climate Change & Sustainable Development Goals	353	565
Equality for Girls and Women	228	227
Total charitable activities expenditure	2,301	2,964
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	2,400	3,058
Net incoming resources and net movement in funds	1,728	189
Fund balances brought forward	1,717	1,528
FUND BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD	3,445	1,717

	2015	2014
	£000	£000
THE ELDERS FOUNDATION		
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2015		
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	103	147
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	61	84
Cash at bank and in hand	3,590	2,435
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	3,651	2,519
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(309)	(949)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	3,342	1,570
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	3,445	1,717
TOTAL NET ASSETS	3,445	1,717
THE FUNDS OF THE CHARITY:		
Unrestricted funds	3,445	1,717
TOTAL FUNDS	3,445	1,717

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The Elders are grateful to the members of the Advisory Council, whose support and advice enables them to carry out their work.

Richard Branson

Virgin Unite

Peter Gabriel

The Peter Gabriel Trust

Kathy Bushkin Calvin

United Nations Foundation

Jeremy Collier

Jeremy Collier Foundation

Niclas Kjellström-Matseke

Swedish Postcode Foundation

Randy Newcomb

Humanity United

Jean Oelwang

Virgin Unite

Pam Omidyar

Humanity United

Mabel van Oranje

Girls Not Brides

Sally Osberg

Skoll Foundation

Julie Quadrio Curzio

The Quadrio Curzio Family Trust

Shannon Sedgwick Davis

Bridgeway Foundation

Jeff Skoll

Skoll Foundation

Marieke van Schaik

Dutch Postcode Lottery

Lulit Solomon

Jeremy Collier Foundation

Amy Towers

The Nduna Foundation

Jeff Towers

The Nduna Foundation

The Elders' Team provides policy, communications and operational support.

To contact the Team:

Email: connect@theElders.org

Tel: +44 20 7013 4646

Web: www.theElders.org

 www.facebook.com/theelders

 www.twitter.com/theelders



Photo: Neville Elder



Photo: Jeff Moore



Photo: Neville Elder



Photo: Jeff Moore



Photo: Muath Khatib



Photo: Ander McIntyre



Photo: Ander McIntyre

“The Elders can speak freely and boldly,
working both publicly and behind the scenes.

They will reach out to those who
most need their help.

They will support courage where there is fear,
foster agreement where there is conflict and
inspire hope where there is despair.”

Nelson Mandela 2007

Follow The Elders:



www.facebook.com/theelders



www.twitter.com/theelders



www.flickr.com/photos/theelders



www.youtube.com/user/theeldersorg

The Elders Foundation PO Box 67772 London W14 4EH United Kingdom
Registered charity in England and Wales. Reg. No. 1132397

Published in 2016 > Designed by coastlinecreative.co.uk

www.theElders.org