

## Kofi Annan

Former UN Secretary-General and Nobel Peace Laureate; put development, human rights, the rule of law, good governance and peace at the top of the United Nations agenda.

- United Nations Secretary-General 1997-2006
- Initiated the Millennium Development Goals
- Played a central role in the acceptance by Member States of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine
- Nobel Peace Laureate (jointly with the UN) 2001

*"No one can deprive us of the right, as concerned global citizens, to want to do something about the challenges that face us."*

## Work with The Elders

Kofi Annan has been a member of The Elders since its founding in 2007, ensuring that poverty alleviation, justice and good governance remain core to the group's work.

He helped focus the world's attention on [Zimbabwe](#)'s humanitarian crisis in November 2008 in a high-profile visit to the region with Jimmy Carter and Graça Machel. The following year he and the Elders persuaded international donors to expand humanitarian aid to Zimbabwe, arguing that the new inclusive government urgently needed 'humanitarian-plus' resources to help stabilise the country.

In late April 2011, following months of post-election violence, Mr Annan, Mary Robinson and Desmond Tutu travelled to Abidjan, [Côte d'Ivoire](#), to encourage reconciliation. After meeting President Ouattara, civil society representatives, members of the opposition and people who had fled their homes in the fighting, he warned that much of Ivorian society remained polarised and stressed that the new government's role was to ensure the safety and security of all Ivorians.

## Reforming the United Nations

Kofi Annan was the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations and the first to emerge from the ranks of UN staff. A constant advocate for human rights, development and the rule of

law, he revitalised the UN, bringing it closer to the public by forging ties with civil society, the private sector and other partners.

At his initiative, the [Millennium Development Goals](#) were introduced in 2000, creating for the first time a global blueprint to end poverty. Mr Annan also oversaw the strengthening of UN peacekeeping to cope with a rapid rise in the number of operations and personnel, and the establishment in 2005 of two new intergovernmental bodies: the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council.

Mr Annan played a central role in the creation of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the adoption of the UN's first-ever counter-terrorism strategy, and the acceptance by Member States of the 'responsibility to protect' people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity when their own states fail to do so. His Global Compact initiative, launched in 1999, has become the world's largest effort to promote corporate social responsibility.

In 2001, Kofi Annan was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace jointly with the United Nations "for their work for a better organised and more peaceful world."

### **Diplomacy and conflict mediation**

As UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan undertook wide-ranging diplomatic initiatives. In 1998, he helped ease the transition to civilian rule in Nigeria. Also that year, his efforts helped avoid an outbreak of hostilities in Iraq following an impasse between the country and the UN Security Council over compliance with resolutions on weapons inspections and other matters.

In 1999, he was deeply involved in the process by which Timor-Leste gained independence from Indonesia. He was responsible for certifying Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, and in 2006 his efforts contributed to securing a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hizbollah. That year he also mediated a settlement between Cameroon and Nigeria during their dispute over the Bakassi peninsula.

Mr Annan continues to use his experience to mediate and resolve conflict. In Kenya, in early 2008, he led the African Union's Panel of Eminent African Personalities to mediate a peaceful resolution to the post-election violence. He continues to work with the Kenyan people and government to implement the legal, political and economic reforms contained in the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation agreements.

### **Advocate for Africa**

Since leaving the United Nations, Kofi Annan has continued to advocate for better policies to meet the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, particularly in Africa.

In 2007 he established the [Kofi Annan Foundation](#), which works to promote better global governance and strengthen the capacities of people and countries to achieve a fairer, more secure world.

He also chairs the Africa Progress Panel, which tracks and encourages sustained development across the African continent; the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, an organisation that works to promote rapid, sustainable agricultural growth based on smallholder farmers in Africa; and is a Board Member, Patron or Honorary Member of a number of organisations.