

## **Lesley-Anne Knight appointed Chief Executive Officer of The Elders**

6 December 2012

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The Elders are delighted to announce the appointment of Lesley-Anne Knight as Chief Executive Officer (CEO). As CEO, Lesley-Anne Knight will manage the London-based staff and foundation that supports the work of the Elders. She will take up her appointment on 2 January 2013.

Lesley-Anne Knight was previously Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis, a global confederation of 165 Catholic development and humanitarian organisations. In this role she was responsible for strategic planning, policy and advocacy, and the global coordination of the Caritas response to humanitarian emergencies as a result of natural disasters, famine and conflict. She was the first woman to be appointed to the position.

**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**, Chair of The Elders, said:

*"I am thrilled with Lesley-Anne's appointment and warmly welcome her to The Elders' family. She has an outstanding track record as a compassionate and visionary leader and we all look forward to working with her."*

Born and brought up in Zimbabwe, Ms Knight attended university in Cape Town, South Africa, during the apartheid era. This early exposure to enforced racial segregation instilled in her a keen awareness of inequality and injustice, and influenced her decision to pursue a career that would address issues such as poverty, injustice and conflict.

Following further study in France and the UK, she worked in Spain, Guatemala and Mexico before being recruited by Oxfam as a Programme Assistant for Central America.

After eight years in Latin America, Ms Knight moved to London and joined CAFOD (the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development), as Programme Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean. She later went on to become the International Director at CAFOD, responsible for a staff of around 200, with 10 regional offices and operations across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Lesley-Anne Knight succeeds Mabel van Oranje, The Elders' first CEO, who resigned in May 2012 for personal reasons.

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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 [Martti Ahtisaari](#), [Kofi Annan](#), [Ela Bhatt](#), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#), [Graça Machel](#), [Mary Robinson](#) and [Desmond Tutu](#) (Chair).

[Nelson Mandela](#) is an honorary Elder.

For biographies of the Elders, blogs, photos, videos and more information about their work please go to [www.theElders.org](http://www.theElders.org).

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Media inquiries: [media@theElders.org](mailto:media@theElders.org)