

## World leaders risk climate catastrophe with warm words and no action

**NEW YORK, 24 September 2019**

As the UN Climate Summit concluded, The Elders appealed to world leaders to act on the outrage of millions of strikers around the world and upscale commitments to end fossil fuel use.

[Mary Robinson](#), Chair of The Elders, said:

*This is a fight for our lives and, currently, we are losing. World leaders must act on the legitimate outrage of millions of climate strikers and drastically upscale commitments to end fossil fuel use.*

*We have seen encouraging announcements on carbon reduction from several countries at the UN Climate Summit, including impressive commitments from Denmark, Finland and Slovakia. We have also heard from businesses, investors, and both regional and city authorities taking bold action. But what we really need now is action from the G20.*

*The world's major economies must heed the call of young people about the intergenerational injustice of climate change: unite behind the science, seize the solutions that are at hand, and make ambitious commitments without delay.*

*We urge all nations to commit to achieving carbon neutrality before 2050; to immediately end construction of, and investment in, coal power; and to implement a green transition that is just and equitable.*

On climate justice, **Mary Robinson** added:

*Intergenerational injustice, poverty injustice, gender injustice, racial injustice – climate change exacerbates them all. Anyone who cares about justice must now step up and join the fight against climate change.*

[Ban Ki-moon](#), Deputy Chair of The Elders and former UN Secretary-General, stated:

*The science demands that countries around the world step up and address the climate emergency. Political leaders must heed the call of Secretary-General Guterres and end the financing of fossil fuels.*

[Gro Harlem Brundtland](#), former Prime Minister of Norway and former Director-General of the World Health Organization, added:

*We have talked about sustainable development for decades, and we have come together year after year to talk yet again of grand plans and new ideas. But future generations will condemn us if we do not urgently turn this talk into action. We are failing them, and they will rightly not forgive our inaction.*

[Ricardo Lagos](#), former President of Chile, emphasised the need for decisive action:

*Despite the acknowledgement of the climate emergency by many nations, global carbon emissions are rising. This is simply not good enough. Governments must come to the Santiago COP in December with clear plans, and they must be ready to implement those plans. All nations need to firmly commit to net zero by 2050 and say no to new coal investment.*

ENDS

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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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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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