

A group of diverse people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are smiling and clapping. They are wearing blue lanyards with ID badges. The background is dark with a cluster of bright, starburst-like lights in the upper right corner.

# The Elders

**TOGETHER, WE  
CAN SHAPE A  
BETTER FUTURE  
FOR US ALL**

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ANNUAL REVIEW 2019



## THE ELDERS

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**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.**

- Mary Robinson**, Chair
- Martti Ahtisaari**, Elder Emeritus
- Ban Ki-moon**, Deputy Chair
- Ela Bhatt**, Elder Emeritus
- Lakhdar Brahimi**
- Gro Harlem Brundtland**
- Fernando Henrique Cardoso**, Elder Emeritus
- Jimmy Carter**, Elder Emeritus
- Zeid Raad Al Hussein**
- Hina Jilani**
- Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**
- Ricardo Lagos**
- Graça Machel**, Deputy Chair
- Juan Manuel Santos**
- Desmond Tutu**, Elder Emeritus
- Ernesto Zedillo**

**Kofi Annan** (1938-2018) was a founding member of The Elders and served as Chair from 2013-2018.



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

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**“The world needs new vision and a bold sense of purpose if we are to prevent the scourge of war and overcome the existential threats we face.”**

**Mary Robinson**

At the start of a new decade, the world continues to face two distinct existential threats: nuclear proliferation and the climate crisis, and now the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting our lives across the world.

Responding to these threats is critical, but made harder at a time when multilateral co-operation is being undermined by populism, nationalism and a failure of collective solidarity.

The Elders believe that the multilateral system must be defended and protected. In December 2019, we called on all world leaders to:

*“acknowledge that effective multilateralism is in their own national interest, regardless of size or strength. Getting others to cooperate by means of internationally-agreed mechanisms is less costly and more reliable than unilateral force.”*

Such an approach is not only needed in order to tackle the coronavirus pandemic, climate crisis and nuclear non-proliferation, but also crucially important in addressing the alarming escalation of tensions across the Middle East – in Iran, Israel/Palestine, Libya, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere.

Throughout 2019, The Elders undertook initiatives to address these threats, as this Annual Report sets out.

As the United Nations marks its 75th year in 2020, the world needs new vision and a bold sense of purpose if we are to prevent the scourge of war and overcome the existential threats we face.

On nuclear disarmament, The Elders will continue to speak clearly and forcefully about the need for all nuclear powers to get serious about disarmament and to act now to prevent devastation. Crucially, this means the US and Russia extending the New START agreement on nuclear arms control.

On the climate crisis, The Elders recognise the need for bold new initiatives. The disappointing outcome of COP25 in Madrid shows that there is still insufficient political will for urgent, collective action to avert

catastrophe. We need a new mind-set that recognises the urgency of the challenge the IPCC posed in its report on warming at 1.5°C. New ideas are borne from a shared understanding that we need to reduce global carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 and be carbon neutral before 2050.

The United Nations will mark its 75th anniversary with a global dialogue on its future and purpose. This is a cause for celebration, but also for speaking frank truths. Too many member states, not least those with the special responsibility of holding permanent seats on the UN Security Council, treat it as a forum for advancing their own narrow interests rather than a means of addressing common challenges.

The Elders also call on UN member states to do more to advance gender equality. Women drew up a remarkable multilateral agenda in Beijing 25 years ago, and 2020 also marks the twentieth anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, conflict and peacebuilding. But women now face a backlash in marking these momentous anniversaries. Greater priority must be given to the terrible problem of systemic violence and discrimination against women and girls – a cause of immense suffering to which The Elders will continue to draw attention.

When The Elders’ founder, Nelson Mandela, addressed the UN General Assembly in 1994 as President of South Africa, he posed this question:

*“given the interdependence of the nations of the world, what is it that we can and must do to ensure that democracy, peace and prosperity prevail everywhere?”*

To which he suggested a new initiative was needed, one that *“should inspire all of humanity because of the seriousness of its intent.”*

Madiba’s question and answer are still pertinent more than a quarter of a century later. The time for such a new initiative to protect people and planet is surely now. Let us not squander this opportunity.

**Mary Robinson**



## FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**“The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented circumstances and exceptional challenges.”**

**David Nussbaum**

2019 was a year of renewal and development for The Elders. In the early months of 2020, the growing crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented circumstances and exceptional challenges. This report relates to 2019 – when the global context was different from current circumstances.

Looking back at last year, our new Chair, Mary Robinson, led our work with characteristic tenacity and focus, building on the strong legacy of her predecessors Kofi Annan and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

We welcomed three new members to The Elders: Juan Manuel Santos, former President of Colombia; Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former President of Liberia; and Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Each of them brought new energy and valuable perspectives on conflict resolution, reconciliation, development and defending human rights in challenging political circumstances.

The Elders also launched two new initiatives in 2019 in line with the adoption of the 2018-22 Strategic Framework, on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, and on Access to Justice. These two new areas of work highlight the diversity not only of the Elders' concerns but also our capabilities.

We have engaged in high-level dialogue with key leaders on the nuclear threat, most notably President Xi Jinping of China, while linking with civil society and youth disarmament campaigners in the US and Europe.

Our access to justice work has ranged from helping shape international frameworks to measure progress on key indicators such as SDG 16, to sharing platforms with justice defenders in the US and supporting front-line activists from West Africa to Nepal.

In this, and in all the other work The Elders accomplish, we frame and calibrate our interventions according to the wider external context. In 2019, this was particularly challenging given rising tensions in the Middle East and waves of popular protests against inequality and injustice from Latin America to the Levant. These developments all served to highlight the urgent need for global attention on the three themes that permeate the Elders' agenda: governance, conflict and inequality.

The Elder's work and approach continues to be an essential bulwark in the face of the winds of populism and isolationism in politics around the world. Our mission and vision for a world that must work together on the shared problems we all face is hugely significant in the face of a faltering multilateral system that continues to be undermined by some of those nations who have benefited most from its development.

2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The Elders believe that, for all its imperfections, the UN remains the indispensable cornerstone of the rules-based international order. Over the next twelve months, we will work to support its efforts to maintain a rules-based multilateral system, uphold international law and address the new challenges arising from the coronavirus pandemic.

2020 also marks the thirtieth anniversary of the release from prison of The Elders' founder, Nelson Mandela. I hope that his legacy of struggle, sacrifice and magnanimity will inspire leaders and civil society activists alike, recalling his wise words that *“kindness and generous accommodation are the catalysts for real change”*.

**David Nussbaum**  
Chief Executive

**“ Our mission and vision for a world that must work together on the shared problems we all face is hugely significant in the face of a faltering multilateral system that continues to be undermined by some of those nations.**

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# THE ELDERS' VISION AND WORK

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The Elders was founded in 2007 by Nelson Mandela to “support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict and inspire hope where there is despair”.

Charged with this mandate, the Elders use their independence, collective experience and influence to work for peace, justice and human rights worldwide. Working both publicly and through private diplomacy, they engage with global leaders and civil society to resolve conflict and address its root causes, to challenge injustice, and to promote ethical leadership and good governance.

The organisation’s collective identity is strongly rooted in the mandate bestowed by Mandela, years of collective endeavour and a shared sense of mission and values. The Elders’ independence and integrity are fundamental, enabling them to speak freely and boldly, working both publicly and behind the scenes to help tackle complex and seemingly intractable issues.

The Elders’ role is often catalytic: they create space for others whose causes are aligned with their vision for a better future, and aim to strengthen the voices of emerging leaders with integrity.

The Elders also seek to give a voice to some of those who are voiceless, for example through sharing their experiences publicly during a country visit in which they hear directly from marginalised people about the consequences of conflict or other failures of leadership, or bringing those stories into international forums.

The Elders’ range of approaches to their work has included:

- o **International travel (country visits, speaking at international conferences, holding high-level and grassroots meetings)**
- o **Letters sent privately, sometimes with a public statement issued in parallel**
- o **Private discussions with government and other leaders**
- o **Convening or co-hosting meetings and events with select public audiences**
- o **Public statements, often with follow-up media work, opinion pieces, blogs or interviews.**



## ELDERS' MISSION AND STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2018-22 Strategic Framework has been designed to provide institutional coherence to ongoing policy and communications activities.

The Elders' Strategic Framework is arranged around three key themes:

- o Governance and Leadership
- o Conflict, its Causes and Consequences
- o Inequality, Exclusion and Injustice

Under the umbrella of these three themes, The Elders focus on six programmes of work.

- o Ethical Leadership and Multilateral Cooperation
- o Conflict Countries and Regions
- o Climate Change
- o Refugees and Migration
- o Universal Health Coverage
- o Access to Justice

Many of the issues on which The Elders work cannot neatly be contained within one theme, but encompass elements of two or all three. The Elders favour a holistic approach which considers all the diverse aspects to any geopolitical problem, and includes the range of relevant stakeholders when trying to arrive at a sustainable outcome. In particular, equality for women and girls is a theme through every area of our work. We also seek to empower young people and promote intergenerational dialogue to arrive at sustainable solutions for current and future generations.

One comparative advantage of the group is that its members represent no vested interest and are free from national or institutional influence. The Elders can "speak truth to power" from a genuinely objective standpoint, and use their position to amplify the voices of marginalised and disempowered groups, particularly victims of conflict and discrimination.

More information about all the work of The Elders, can be found online at: [theElders.org](http://theElders.org).

# REVIEW OF PROGRAMMATIC INITIATIVES

**“ There is the very real risk that the whole architecture of arms control and nuclear non-proliferation that was built up during the decades of superpower confrontation may collapse, through a combination of neglect, hubris and ill-founded threat analysis.**

Ban Ki-moon, June 2019

## ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

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### NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT

The Elders launched a new initiative in 2019 on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament amid a backdrop of rising tensions between the two main nuclear powers, the United States and Russia, and a sense that the global arms control architecture that had largely held sway since the end of the Cold War was increasingly under threat.

Conscious of the entrenched positions and institutional inertia regarding disarmament, The Elders consulted widely with nuclear experts, before agreeing on a set of proposals that could appear credible to the main nuclear powers as well as the international community at large. This “minimisation” agenda is focused on the so-called “4 Ds”: Doctrine, De-alerting, Deployment and Decreased numbers.

Mary Robinson and Lakhdar Brahimi introduced the proposals at the Munich Security Conference

in February 2019, and also discussed them with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif and representatives from NATO and the United Nations. Op-eds outlining the proposals were also published by Mary Robinson in *The Independent* (UK), and Ernesto Zedillo in *YaleGlobal Online*.

Nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament also featured in the discussions between the Elders’ and senior figures in the Chinese leadership, including President Xi, during their trip to Beijing in April 2019.

In June 2019, Mary Robinson and Ban Ki-moon raised the Elders’ nuclear agenda at a session of the UN Security Council focused on conflict resolution, and in a meeting with UN Secretary-General António Guterres. In September, Mary Robinson and Gro Brundtland discussed the



"4Ds" with US Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Christopher Ford, at meetings in Washington DC where they also briefed members of Congress and held public events with academics, journalists and policy experts.

Lakhdar Brahimi also presented The Elders' proposals at a meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Belgrade in October, following which the IPU included The Elders' proposals for disarmament in the outcome statement from their meeting.

As part of efforts to encourage and support civil society engagement on the nuclear threat, Mary Robinson spoke in November 2019 at a special conference in The Hague convened by the organisation of Dutch Physicians Against Nuclear Weapons (NVMP) and the Netherlands' Foreign Ministry. This conference was notable for the involvement of young peace and disarmament activists alongside politicians and policymakers.

Despite retrograde steps like the termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty between Russia and the US in 2019, and scant prospects of either country showing leadership in multilateral negotiations in 2020, The Elders' engagement on this issue has been welcomed by the arms control policy community who value their high profile and moral standing in the debate.





## UN AND P5 ENGAGEMENT

Throughout 2019, The Elders were increasingly alarmed by the attacks on the multilateral system, including unilateral withdrawals by the US Administration from international treaties and organisations, from the Iranian nuclear deal, to the INF Treaty and key organs of the World Trade Organization.

It was against this backdrop that a delegation of Elders including Mary Robinson, Ban Ki-moon, Ernesto Zedillo, Lakhdar Brahimi and Ricardo Lagos met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing in April 2019. The Elders' visit to China included high-level discussions on multilateralism, climate change and development, nuclear rearmament and non-proliferation, and human rights, alongside a 'town-hall' meeting with students of the China Foreign Affairs University.

The Elders had open and wide-ranging discussions with President Xi, where he reaffirmed China's commitment to multilateralism and the importance of a strong and effective United Nations. The Elders acknowledged China's unprecedented international cooperation – including the Belt and Road Initiative – and they also expressed hope that China will step up its efforts to make that cooperation consistent with the development needs and financial and environmental sustainability of partner countries.

Mary Robinson, Ban Ki-moon and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf discussed the diverse challenges facing the UN and the need to revitalise multilateralism with UN Secretary-General António Guterres in New York in June, as well as at a public meeting hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations and with members of the UN press corps. Juan Manuel Santos joined the meetings with the members of the UN Security Council and was able to give personal insights into the state of the Colombian peace process just before Council members visited that country for a fact-finding mission.

**“ Without a concerted commitment to defend multilateralism, we will not bequeath a safe world to future generations. They will neither forget nor forgive such a collective failure.**

The Elders, December 2019

With unilateralist and isolationist pressures continuing, in December 2019 The Elders issued a statement in defence of the principles and institutions of multilateralism, and called on all world leaders to use the 75th anniversary of the UN in 2020 to preserve the dispute settlement mechanism of the World Trade Organization and to reaffirm their commitment to peaceful cooperation in the face of shared challenges.





## CLIMATE CHANGE

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The climate crisis was a key focus for The Elders in 2019, reflecting the severity of the environmental, political, economic and social impacts of rising emissions and temperatures.

Some years after the signing of the Paris Agreement, The Elders continued to support a multilateral approach aligned to the broader 2030 Development Agenda and urged countries to increase their ambition to cut emissions and end the use of fossil fuels.

During their visit to China in early April, the Elders repeatedly raised the need for China to end investment in fossil fuels through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and were pleased when President Xi later announced that he is committed to a “green” BRI.

In Germany, Mary Robinson spoke at a Berlin Energy Transition Week event in April, which is influential in shaping energy policy in Germany and specifically its “just transition” away from coal. Shortly following the event, Germany confirmed it will not fund any new coal projects abroad through its KfW development bank.

Ban Ki-moon wrote an op-ed criticising the UK Export Finance agency for funding fossil fuel projects abroad, which attracted significant

attention in the media and from civil society. The Elders also submitted official evidence on this to the UK parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee, increasing the pressure on the UK Government. Mary Robinson reinforced these points at a keynote speech in London when she received the prestigious Kew Award, which was well received by scientists, environmentalists and policy experts.

In September, Ricardo Lagos spoke at a public event in Johannesburg alongside former South African President Kgalema Motlanthe on the need for a just and sustainable transition out of coal, at a time when South Africa’s main state energy company was mired in financial and political crisis. Both investors and politicians at the event were eager to explore alternatives.

In November, Ban Ki-moon published an op-ed in German newspaper Der Tagesspiegel urging the European Investment Bank (EIB) to end new lending for fossil fuel investments, and for Germany to show leadership as one of the bank’s key shareholders. The Elders and others welcomed the landmark decision taken later that month by the EIB to stop funding fossil fuel projects at the end of 2021.

# TIME

**“Governments in Africa and in lower-income countries need to be more assertive in pushing for clean energy and action on climate change. They must refuse to be passive recipients of external aid regardless of strings attached.”**

Graça Machel, September 2019

The Elders continued to engage around the G20, with Ernesto Zedillo making a public address at the “F20” philanthropic and investment forum in Japan. He spoke on the importance of governments taking action and made it clear that current commitments are nowhere close to what is needed to meet the realities of the climate crisis.

The Elders also engaged with key players in the fossil fuel and financial sectors. In June, Mary Robinson participated in the Vatican Oil and Gas Summit as the representative of civil society, and presented to the gathering of private sector companies, helping to secure important commitments in the final statement and bridging the gap between investors and oil companies.

Her participation also led to an invitation to speak at the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures Summit (TCFD Summit) in Japan by the head of the Japanese pension fund. At this summit in October, Mary Robinson outlined the need for Japan to show leadership on the transition away from a carbon-based economy, and held meetings with the Minister of Environment, Minister of Foreign Affairs and State Minister for Economy, Trade and Industry.

Mary Robinson also spoke at the UN Secretary-General’s climate summit in New York in



September, and – together with Ricardo Lagos – at the COP 25 climate summit in Madrid in December. Despite both events failing to yield sufficient political commitments from leaders, the Elders used their platforms to amplify the voices of young activists, women and environmental defenders and to maintain the pressure on politicians, business leaders and investors into the crucial year of 2020. To this end, Mary Robinson gave the keynote address at a COP 25 side event focused on the Escazú Agreement which featured government speakers from Costa Rica, Mexico and Chile as well as indigenous people and civil society. The Agreement has been a focus for The Elders’ efforts to engage on the issue of environmental rights defenders specifically in Latin America and the Caribbean.



## CONFLICT COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

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The Elders held high-level meetings with a number of world leaders in 2019 to encourage them to use diplomatic and political means to resolve conflicts, with a particular focus on the Middle East.

As part of their longstanding engagements with Iran's leadership to defuse regional tensions and avoid a wholesale collapse of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal, Elders held meetings with the Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, at the Munich Security Conference in February, the UN General Assembly in September, and the Doha Forum in December. These meetings also focused on the prospects for an end to war in Yemen and Syria, and the need for all parties to engage in good faith with the UN's peace efforts.

As part of this regional dialogue, Mary Robinson and Ban Ki-moon also met the Foreign Minister of Kuwait, who hosted The Elders to discuss conflict prevention at the UN Security Council. They discussed the tensions around Iran and the need to mend the divisions between Gulf Arab states in order to address other regional conflicts. Delegations of Elders also met twice with the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister of Qatar to discuss conflicts in the Middle East, especially the tensions between the US and Iran, and the need for inclusive dialogue.

In April, Gro Brundtland wrote an op-ed in the Financial Times calling on European states to show leadership and initiative on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the face of increasing unilateral action by the US that looked to imperil any prospect of a just two-state solution. Gro Brundtland also met Israeli peace activists at a youth summit in London to offer her support for their efforts in promoting dialogue, reconciliation and human rights.



**“Europe and the Arab states need jointly to remind the US of a simple truth: in any peace process, the issues that drive conflict need to be resolved, not swept under the carpet.”**

Gro Harlem Brundtland, April 2019

Beyond the Middle East, the Elders used their board meeting in Addis Ababa in May to talk to senior officials from the African Union and the UN about conflict resolution and transition developments in the Horn of Africa, notably Sudan and South Sudan, and the worrying situation in the Sahel.

In Addis Ababa, the Elders also met with Ethiopia's new Prime Minister (and Nobel Peace Laureate) Abiy Ahmed. They commended his peace deal with Eritrea and offered support for his ambitious reform agenda whilst urging him to continue to open the space for human rights and freedom of expression. The Elders also encouraged PM Abiy to put pressure on the leaders of South Sudan finally to implement their peace agreement and act in the true interests of their people.

In September, Mary Robinson and Graça Machel returned to Zimbabwe following the visit in 2018 which marked the last public mission by the Elders' late chair, Kofi Annan. Alarmed by the worsening economic crisis and political violence in the country throughout the year, the Elders sought in meetings

with President Mnangagwa, opposition leader Nelson Chamisa, civil society groups and diplomats to promote an inclusive national dialogue. They held a valuable and much-appreciated event with women leaders from many sectors convened by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches.

In 2020, The Elders' work on conflict will continue to focus on the Middle East, through initiatives such as dialogue with civil society groups from Israel and Palestine, and on women and peacebuilding with mediators from across the Arab world.

The Elders will also continue their engagement with Zimbabwe and seek to identify further ways to promote an inclusive national dialogue between the government and opposition, and support civil society and human rights defenders.

The Elders' Secretariat will monitor developments in a number of other conflicts where Elders have a track record or specific interests, and use speeches and media to highlight key issues for peacebuilding.



## REFUGEES AND MIGRATION

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The Elders' advocacy on refugees and migration had two focal points in 2019: top-level political advocacy for fairer and more humane treatment of people forcibly displaced from their homes for whatever reason, and visible support for refugees and migrants on the ground.

During the board meeting in Ethiopia, Mary Robinson, Ernesto Zedillo, Zeid Raad Al Hussein and Juan Manuel Santos visited a refugee camp in the Gambela region of the country that houses people fleeing the conflict in neighbouring South Sudan. They spoke directly to the refugees and learned about persistent fears of sexual violence for women refugees, which they relayed to UNHCR and the Ethiopian authorities.

In Addis Ababa, Mary Robinson and Lakhdar Brahimi also spoke at an event on forced displacement at the UN's Economic Commission for Africa, with aid workers, humanitarian agencies, government officials and diplomats. They shared a platform with a former Ethiopian refugee who has now become a refugee aid worker, to highlight the work being done in Ethiopia to help around a million refugees. This event also highlighted the plight of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ethiopia in a discussion with the Minister of Peace, who spoke at the event – the first time she had addressed such a gathering, demonstrating The Elders' convening role.



## INDEPENDENT

**“I firmly believe that the talents of refugees and businesses can combine to form a virtuous circle which can then encourage politicians to take progressive steps to improve integration and combat xenophobia, bigotry and racism.”**

Ban Ki-moon, September 2019

At a global level, Ban Ki-moon spoke at the launch of the Business Refugees Action Network’s statement, “Business Takes a Stand for Refugees”, which brought together a high-level group of CEOs on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York to emphasise that refugees must be included in the SDGs.

Also in September, Mary Robinson and Gro Brundtland published an op-ed in Brussels-based publication “EU Observer”, calling on the new EU leadership to set a positive global example and agree on ambitious refugee resettlement targets in the run-up to the Global Forum for Refugees in December.

The Elders are concerned to ensure that refugees themselves are represented and participate in debates around their future. In December, The Elders wrote to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to support and encourage his work on the Global Forum for Refugees, and to urge him to take further steps to ensure refugees were included in discussions. The Elders also published a blog post by two members of the Global Refugee-Led Network on ways in which refugees were trying to make their voices heard at the Forum and more widely.

The Elders’ work on refugees and migration in 2020 will include op-eds on the global problem of statelessness with particular reference to developments in India, and the health humanitarian crisis created by the mass incarceration of migrants on both sides of the US-Mexico border.



## UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

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Targeted country visits and international political advocacy formed the key strands of the Elders' UHC work in 2019.

The high point was the visit in September by Gro Brundtland and Ricardo Lagos to South Africa, in support of the NHI (National Health Insurance) reforms, which would move the country closer to UHC. The Elders met regional health officials; addressed the joint health committee in parliament; participated in a 300-person public meeting on South Africa's health reforms at the chief teaching hospital in Johannesburg; and visited a trauma unit in the big public hospital in Soweto.

Joined by Graça Machel, they met President Ramaphosa and the Minister of Health in Cape Town to discuss how and why to accelerate the NHI reforms. The Elders' visit and support of the NHI reforms attracted considerable media attention, which coincided with the NHI Bill having just been presented to parliament.

Gro Brundtland and Ricardo Lagos published a joint op-ed in the prominent "Business Day" newspaper - widely read in political and financial circles, and hitherto sceptical about NHI - arguing why the time is right for South Africa to adopt UHC, which was well received by civil society partners and health advocates.

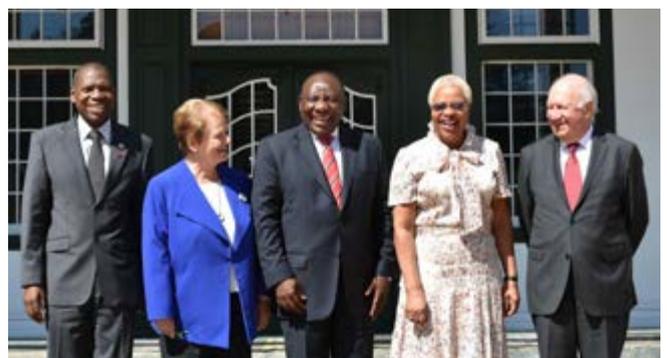
**“ Resilience to epidemics and deliberate biological threats must be firmly rooted in a health system that is fit for purpose for the challenges it faces every day.**

Gro Harlem Brundtland

Later in September, Gro Brundtland gave a keynote address at the UN's High Level Summit on UHC during the General Assembly in New York, following the UN Secretary-General, the WHO Director-General and the President of the World Bank. Her speech emphasised many of the Elders' key policy messages on UHC emphasising that UHC requires political leadership and public financing, and that it cannot be achieved through private health insurance. These themes are now being widely picked up and championed in the global health policy debate - which was not the case when The Elders' UHC initiative was launched in 2016.

In 2020, The Elders will help to catalyse UHC reforms by raising awareness of our key policy messages and the practical steps leaders can take to move towards UHC. We will also support the work of civil society organisations working for better and more equitable health care.

The threat to global health posed by the COVID-19 virus makes The Elders' support for Universal Health Coverage all the more critical, as health security risks to the whole population are increased when people do not have access to care for financial reasons.





## ACCESS TO JUSTICE

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2019 saw the formal launch of the Elders' new initiative on Access to Justice, building on engagement with civil society partners during the 2017-18 "Walk Together" project to celebrate the organisation's tenth anniversary.

The Access to Justice programme was launched by Mary Robinson and Hina Jilani during the Justice Partners Forum in The Hague in February 2019 and was much welcomed by civil society partners and participating governments.

A key priority for the launch year was to encourage governments to make commitments on Access to Justice at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on the SDGs in July and at the UN SDG Summit in September, and to strengthen the global movement on access to justice. The Elders also sought in particular to draw attention to violence against women and girls as a profound global injustice and the crucial need to address this issue.

To help achieve these goals, Elders spoke at high level forums including the OECD Policy Roundtable in March in Lisbon, the World Justice Forum in April in The Hague, the Open Government Partnership Forum in May in Ottawa, Women Deliver in Vancouver in June, the G7+ Ministerial Meeting in June in The Hague, the Asia Pro Bono conference in Nepal in September, and via a video message at the Sexual Violence Conflict Research Initiative in Cape Town in October.

“ **Justice is a thread that runs through all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Without increased justice, the world will be unable to end poverty, reduce inequality and reach the furthest behind first.**

Hina Jilani

At the HLPF at the UN in July, Mary Robinson spoke in the Ministerial segment on access to justice and addressed several side events together with Hina Jilani. The Elders hosted a private high-level dinner for Heads of Delegation reporting on SDG 16 at the HLPF, attended by the UN Deputy Secretary-General, to encourage further attention to and commitments on access to justice.

In 2020, The Elders plan to support the Africa launch of the Justice for All report and the inaugural Justice for All Ministerial summit in The Hague, and the passing of a UN General Assembly resolution on justice for survivors of sexual violence.



# FINANCIAL REVIEW

FOR THE YEAR TO  
31 DECEMBER 2019

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## Income

The Elders' income for the year was £3.3 million (2018: £3.0 million). This includes £0.1 million (2018: £0.3 million) of restricted funding used for our Programmatic work. All restricted income was fully expended during the year.

## Expenditure

The Elders' expenditure for the year was £3.2 million (2018: £3.9 million). This relates primarily to the delivery of a global programme of activities agreed by the Elders, supported by a Secretariat based in London. The Secretariat provides the Elders with policy research, conducts advocacy and communications work, and is responsible for logistics and other support activities.

## Result

The Elders' surplus for the year was £0.02 million (2018: £0.8 million deficit), in line with the plan for the year.

## Reserves

Reserves at the end of 2019, all unrestricted, were £2.7 million (2018: £2.7 million), of which £0.4 million were represented by fixed assets, leaving available reserves of £2.3 million which represents about 8 months' expenditure. This falls short of the amount determined by the reserves policy described below. The approach of The Elders is to maintain sufficient reserves to enable normal operating activities to continue for a period of time, should a shortfall in income or unexpected expenditure occur, taking account of potential risks that may arise; and the policy is to maintain reserves sufficient to meet at least 12 months' expenditure. Any future surpluses will be directed to meet the 12 months target. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the more difficult fundraising environment will present challenges for realising the organisation's income plans in 2020. Whilst lower travel costs will go some way to offsetting any deficit in income, the organisation may have to draw on some of its reserves. A significant proportion of the income anticipated for 2020 has been received during the first quarter, which underpins the financial resilience of the organisation.

Available reserves at the end of 2019 were £2.3 million which represents about 8 months' expenditure. Unrestricted income of £1.5 million had been received in 2020 prior to the date that the financial statements were approved, a further £0.5 million is contracted, and at least a further £0.7 million anticipated. The costs of the Secretariat are under £3 million per annum. If the result for 2020 were to be a deficit, this would be covered by reserves, still leaving substantial reserves at the end of 2020.

### **Carbon-offsetting**

The Elders have partnered with UK-based charity Climate Stewards to offset the carbon emissions generated by business flights. For 2019, The Elders donated £12,241 to Carbon Stewards, based on total flight emissions of 612 tonnes CO<sup>2</sup>. Carbon Stewards will use these funds across its portfolio of community-based projects in Kenya, Uganda, Ghana and Mexico. These projects include tree-growing schemes in schools, fuel-efficient cooking stoves and water filter construction, and all are designed to reduce carbon emissions in a sustainable, inclusive way for the benefit of local communities.

## THE ELDERS FOUNDATION STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (Incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)

### YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

	2019	2018
	£000	£000
<b>INCOME FROM:</b>		
Donations and grants		
- General	3,174	2,706
- Project funding	84	324
Interest income	11	10
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>3,269</b>	<b>3,040</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON:</b>		
Raising funds	333	376
Charitable activities		
Ethical Leadership	678	490
Climate Change	555	532
Conflict Countries and Regions	529	819
Refugees and Migration	270	356
Universal Health Coverage	312	364
Access to Justice	571	254
Walk Together	-	675
Total charitable activities expenditure	2,915	3,490
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>3,248</b>	<b>3,866</b>
Net (expenditure)/income and net movement in funds	21	(826)
Fund balances brought forward	2,724	3,550
<b>FUND BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>2,745</b>	<b>2,724</b>

## THE ELDERS FOUNDATION BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2019

	2019	2018
	£000	£000
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Tangible assets	400	443
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Debtors	370	290
Short term deposit	500	-
Cash at bank and in hand	1,961	2,332
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>2,831</b>	<b>2,622</b>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(255)	(107)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>2,576</b>	<b>2,515</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>2,976</b>	<b>2,958</b>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(231)	(234)
<b>TOTAL FUNDS (All funds unrestricted)</b>	<b>2,745</b>	<b>2,724</b>

**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

**Holly Branson**  
Virgin Unite

**Kathy Calvin**  
United Nations Foundation

**Jeremy Collier**  
Jeremy Collier Foundation

**Don Gips**  
Skoll Foundation

**Lisa Harris**

**Randy Newcomb**  
Humanity United

**Jean Oelwang**  
Virgin Unite

**Mabel van Oranje**  
Girls Not Brides

**Sally Osberg**

**Margriet Schreuders**  
Dutch Postcode Lottery

**Shannon Sedgwick Davis**  
Bridgeway Foundation

**Jeff Skoll**  
Skoll Foundation

**Lulit Solomon**  
Jeremy Collier Foundation

**Amy Towers**  
The Nduna Foundation

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- Charles Stewart  
Mott Foundation
- Chandra Jessee, InMaat  
Foundation
- Ploughshares Fund
- Julie Quadrio Curzio
- Dave Welland



# CAPTIONS AND CREDITS

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**FRONT COVER:** Mary Robinson, Lakhdar Brahimi and Gro Harlem Brundtland with young leaders and members of The Elders' Advisory Council, after convening a workshop on conflict, health, climate and access to justice at One Young World in London, UK in October 2019.

**PAGE 2:** The Elders at their May 2019 Board Meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. From left: Ban Ki-moon, Ernesto Zedillo, Zeid Raad Al Hussein, Mary Robinson, Lakhdar Brahimi, Gro H. Brundtland, Juan Manuel Santos, Graça Machel & Ricardo Lagos. (Photo: Abate Damte/The Elders)

**PAGE 3:** Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders (Photo: Joël Saget /AFP)

**PAGE 4:** David Nussbaum, Chief Executive of The Elders (Photo: Jeff Moore)

**PAGE 7:** Marita Matilde of Mozambique explains the work of Loja de Engergias, to Gro Harlem Brundtland and Mary Robinson, during a special mentoring session at One Young World in London, UK in October 2019.

**PAGE 9:** Ban Ki-moon addresses the UN Security Council in New York, USA in June 2019. (Photo: UN Photo / Loey Felipe)

**PAGE 10:** The Elders meet with China's President Xi Jinping and other senior leaders to discuss global issues, in Beijing, China in April 2019.

**PAGE 11:** Mary Robinson and Ban Ki-moon greet UN Secretary-General António Guterres ahead of addressing the UN Security Council on the importance of collective action, in New York, USA in June 2019.

**PAGE 12:** Mary Robinson calls for action at the COP25 climate conference in Madrid, Spain in December 2019.

**PAGE 14:** On the sidelines of their May 2019 Board Meeting, The Elders meet Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (Photo: Prime Minister's Office)

**PAGE 16:** Refugee women tell Ernesto Zedillo, Mary Robinson and Juan Manuel Santos of the impossible choices they face during a discussion at the Nguenyiel camp in the Gambela region of Ethiopia in May 2019. (Photo: The Elders / Michael Tewelde)

**PAGE 18:** Gro Harlem Brundtland challenges leaders to deliver publicly funded universal health coverage, during her keynote address on behalf of civil society at the UN High Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage in New York, USA in September 2019. (Photo: UN Photo / Kim Haughton)

**PAGE 19:** From left: South Africa's Minister of Health Zweli Mkhize, Gro Harlem Brundtland, President Cyril Ramaphosa, Graça Machel and Ricardo Lagos stand for a photograph following a meeting to discuss South Africa's progress towards Universal Health Coverage, in Cape Town. (Photo: Government of South Africa)

**PAGE 20:** Hina Jilani (pictured centre-right) is joined by Mary Robinson (centre-left) at the launch of The Elders' Access To Justice programme in February 2019. This included a panel discussion on the importance of justice for all with Germán Garavano, Argentina's Minister of Justice and Human Rights and a fellow co-chair on the Taskforce on Justice; and justice experts Sam Muller and Sabrina Mahtani. (Photo: Netherlands MoFA)

**PAGE 27:**

1. Juan Manuel Santos and Zeid Raad Al Hussein in discussion during a visit to a refugee camp in the Gambela region of Ethiopia in May 2019. (Photo: The Elders / Michael Tewelde)
2. Hina Jilani champions civil society at the World Justice Forum, in The Hague, Netherlands in April 2019 (Photo: The World Justice Project)
3. Ricardo Lagos speaks at COP25 in Madrid, Spain in December 2019 (Photo: UNFCCC)
4. Graça Machel and Mary Robinson speak

to the media following a meeting with Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa, in Harare, Zimbabwe in September 2019. (Photo: Annie Mpalume/The Elders)

5. Graça Machel with a participant at an event convened by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches in Harare, Zimbabwe in September 2019. (Photo: Annie Mpalume/The Elders)
6. Gro Harlem Brundtland asserts the importance of strengthening global health security by investing in Universal Health Coverage, at the World Leaders Forum at Columbia University in New York, USA in September 2019. (Photo: Columbia University / Eileen Barroso)
7. Ban Ki-moon discusses the vital role of a well-functioning multilateral system at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, USA in June 2009. (Photo: Don Pollard).
8. Pacific climate activist Brianna Fruean in discussion with Mary Robinson at COP25 in Madrid, Spain in December 2019.
9. Lakhdar Brahimi speaks alongside humanitarian worker and former refugee TSIONAWHIT Gebre-Yohannes, at an Elders public event on forced displacement at the UN Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in May 2019. (Photo: The Elders / Abate Damte)
10. Mary Robinson and Gro Harlem Brundtland in discussion with British broadcast journalist Jon Snow, on the importance of multilateralism and good leadership, at One Young World in London, UK in October 2019. (Photo: One Young World)



**“ 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, Founder of The Elders



**theElders.org**

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