



The  
Elders

Solidarity  
Beyond Borders

*Strengthening shared values  
in troubled times*

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**Annual Review** 2016








Photo: Jeff Moore

**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](http://www.theElders.org)

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#### The Elders:

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



Photo: ODI / The Elders

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

**“People deserve honest explanations and answers from their leaders, not obfuscations given in bad faith.”**

**Kofi Annan**

Looking back on the past year and the tumultuous changes it brought presents us with an opportunity to ask clear, honest questions of ourselves and of our world.

Have we done our utmost to prevent suffering? Have we put the greater good ahead of our own self-interest? Have we chosen our words with care, mindful of their impact on those who listen?

These are questions that my fellow Elders and I will reflect upon as we mark our organisation’s tenth anniversary. Have we fulfilled the mandate bestowed upon us by our founder Nelson Mandela, to work for peace and human rights without fear or favour, to shine a light on forgotten conflicts and to give a voice to the voiceless?

In 2016 we showed solidarity with refugees and migrants in a number of ways, including through a short film, public meetings, a special report and discussions with newly arrived refugees in Berlin and New York. I was humbled to hear refugees in Berlin tell me how they had suffered in their flight but were determined to build new lives for themselves and their families.

We also launched an initiative to support Universal Health Coverage, to ensure that all people across the world are able to access the vital health services they need without suffering financial hardship. The Elders believe that accelerating progress towards UHC is the best strategy to achieve the overall health Sustainable Development Goal. It is also a matter of human rights, gender equality, social development and economic justice.

From urging action on climate change and the wider sustainable development agenda, to supporting peace and reconciliation from Colombia to Burundi, The Elders have not rested on their laurels in 2016 nor will we in the year ahead.

If nothing else, the last twelve months certainly show that the need for ethical leadership as championed by Mandela is just as acute now as in 2007.

The war in Syria continued its agonising course, with the fall of Aleppo to government forces in December 2016 and the unrelenting brutalities of Da’esh/Islamic State. Despite the tireless efforts of the United Nations Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, the international community and

specifically the UN Security Council were unable to reach a united position in favour of peace.

In 2017, as in the past six years, Syria is a battlefield where foreign powers direct and bankroll fighters to further their own political aims whilst the cries of the Syrian people – tortured, gassed, bombed and forced into exile – go unheeded.

Syrian refugees, and millions of other people forced from their homes by war, persecution, poverty or climate change, have faced an increasingly harsh reception when they reach countries of safety. The prevailing public mood in prosperous nations of the West is not one of compassion but suspicion, resentment and often outright racism.

Universal values of human rights, freedom from torture and freedom of expression are assaulted and demeaned when public discourse turns toxic, and racism and misogyny are legitimised by leading politicians.

Writing over a century ago as World War One intensified, the American novelist Henry James wrote: *“the war has used up words... they have been more overstrained and knocked about, and we are now confronted with a depreciation of all our terms”*.

We know that words matter. In this digital age of instant communication and global broadcasting, all citizens and particularly those in public life have a grave responsibility to express themselves with care and dignity.

The language of war can dehumanise: “collateral damage”, “surgical strike”, “enhanced interrogation”. But so can the cynical language of electoral expediency, when migrants become a “swarm”, and walls, dogs and fences are invoked as plausible solutions to complex global problems.

The truth has a power, which is precisely why Nelson Mandela urged The Elders to “speak truth to power”, to be unafraid and unashamed in asserting our shared, universal rights.

Our world will face hard choices in 2017. People deserve honest explanations and answers from their leaders, not obfuscations given in bad faith. As Elders, we pledge to speak out clearly and boldly to help further the interests of our common humanity.

**Kofi Annan** Chair



Photo: Jeff Moore

## FOREWORD FROM THE CEO

Whilst the established multilateral institutions may indeed require some reform, it is still here, in the power of collaborative force, that many crucial opportunities remain for positive change.

**David Nussbaum**

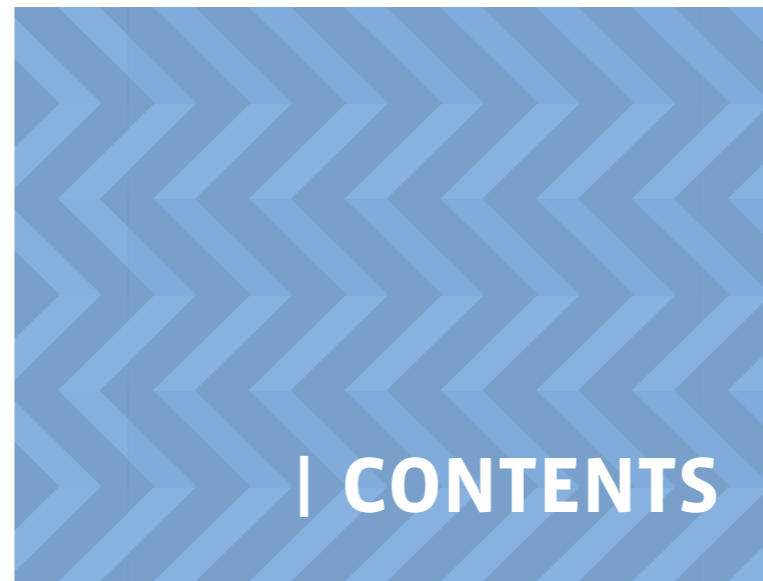
I took up my new position as Chief Executive at The Elders in October 2016, having spent the last two decades of my working life primarily devoted to addressing issues which undermine peace and human rights. I've worked on poverty and humanitarian suffering at Oxfam; on fair trade at Traidcraft and Shared Interest; on anti-corruption at Transparency International; and on environmental integrity and climate change at WWF.

One of my initial tasks at The Elders has been to lead a strategic review of the organisation's first 10 years. I've interviewed a wide variety of past and present stakeholders which has provided a fascinating insight for me into the organisation. The strategic review will serve to inform The Elders' next strategic framework, which is due to be introduced in 2018. There is much excitement around the organisation as we plan and prepare for this new chapter in its history, and also for commemorating the 10th anniversary, starting in July 2017.

During these early months of my tenure, it's apparent that the world is at a significant and divided juncture. This is perhaps best illustrated in the election of Donald Trump as President of the USA, following after the vote in the UK to leave the European Union. Likewise in India, the Philippines and other countries, leaders have adopted positions which undermine a sense of solidarity with our fellow humans, and our willingness to work with others to tackle common problems we face. These developments are signals that many people feel that their voices and perspectives have not been heard or sufficiently recognised by the political classes. Confidence in international organisations is low, while the threats from terrorism and nationalism remain strong, and conflict still abounds around the world.

Against this backdrop of instability however, it is heartening that there remains space for engagement by The Elders. I was delighted to hear, to cite one example, that The Elders' initiative to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations had significantly contributed to a much improved process in the recent selection of the new Secretary-General. I retain a staunch belief that whilst the established multilateral institutions may indeed require some reform, it is still here, in the power of collaborative force, that many crucial opportunities remain for positive change. Alongside these larger organisations and the strength of civil society, the contribution of The Elders continues to be appreciated, and their work as advocates and catalysts of change remains as important as ever.

**David Nussbaum**  
Chief Executive



UN Photo / Albert González Farran

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## ELDERS AS ADVOCATES AND CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

The Elders approached 2016 with a determination to build on the successes of the international community in 2015, such as the **Paris climate agreement** and the **Sustainable Development Goals**, and to support efforts to safeguard and strengthen international institutions. They launched a new initiative on **Universal Health Coverage** as a way to directly contribute towards the implementation of the SDGs and assert the importance of human rights, equality and dignity at the core of development policies.

They also increased their work on **refugees and migration**, launching a new report entitled *"In Challenge Lies Opportunity: How the World Must Respond to Refugees and Mass Migration"* which aimed to challenge the increasingly toxic narrative on these topics and support the rights of vulnerable displaced people.



Photo: kthtrnr / Flickr

This sense of purpose was given further urgency by geopolitical shocks during the year and the wider surge of populist nationalism. The Elders issued a public statement expressing their *"deep regret and dismay"* at the **United Kingdom's** decision to leave the **European Union** following the referendum in June 2016. They hailed the success of the EU in bringing peoples and cultures closer together across a continent previously riven by devastating wars. Following the election of **Donald Trump** as President of the United States in November 2016, they urged the new administration to look to the ideals, magnanimity and empathy of their founder **Nelson Mandela** as a model of **ethical leadership**.

A key focus of efforts to support international institutions in 2016 was the change of leadership at the top of the **United Nations**. As in 2015, The Elders encouraged a transparent selection process for the next Secretary-General, and their efforts were perceived to have been influential in the process adopted, and thus in the final outcome and appointment of **António Guterres**.

2017 will mark the **tenth anniversary** of the founding of The Elders. This will be an opportunity not just to celebrate and reflect upon past successes but to reaffirm their commitment to the mandate bestowed upon them by Nelson Mandela: to support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict, and inspire hope where there is despair.



Photo: ODI / The Elders

The Elders use their **independence, collective experience and influence** to work for **peace, poverty eradication, a sustainable planet, justice and human rights** worldwide. Working both **publicly** and through **private diplomacy**, they engage with **global leaders and civil society** at all levels to **resolve conflict** and address its **root causes**, to **challenge injustice**, and to promote **ethical leadership and good governance**. The group decides collectively where there is the greatest opportunity to make a **real impact**, whether this is:

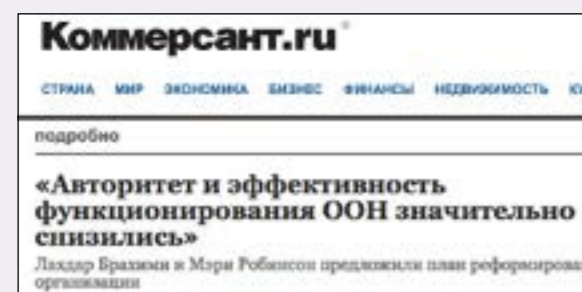
- opening doors to gain access to decision-makers at the highest levels;
- listening to everyone, no matter how unpalatable or unpopular, to promote dialogue;

- providing an independent voice that can speak out, challenge injustice and break taboos;
- bringing people together to catalyse action and forge alliances;
- amplifying and supporting the work of people affected by conflict or working for peace;
- creating space for campaigners and policy makers to broach difficult issues;
- connecting people with decision-makers, ensuring the needs of ordinary citizens are always represented; or
- highlighting neglected issues to generate media coverage and political attention.

## STRONGER UN

The Elders launched their Strengthening the UN initiative at the Munich Security Conference in February 2015, proposing reforms designed to improve the functioning of the **UN Security Council** and to strengthen and ensure the independence of the **UN Secretary-General**. Undertaken as part of The Elders' mission to strengthen global **ethical leadership**, these reforms were proposed as a way of enhancing the legitimacy and efficacy of the UN, which has suffered a loss of credibility in recent years.

In 2016, The Elders focused their efforts on the two most topical of their proposals: on making the process for **selecting the UN Secretary-General** more transparent and meritocratic, and on a code of conduct to restrain the **use of the veto** in the Security Council when mass atrocities are taking place.



Op-ed by Lakhdar Brahimi and Mary Robinson on single term for UN Secretary-General, published in the South China Morning Post and Kommersant, July 2016



Photo: UN Photo / Loey Felipe

The Elders, working with other supportive groups and governments, helped to catalyse momentum behind important reforms to the selection of the Secretary-General, which had for too long been an opaque and secretive process under the control of the five Permanent Members of the Security Council (the P5). For the first time in 2016, agreement was reached to publish the names of all Secretary-General candidates, and to hold **public hearings** with candidates in the UN General Assembly. The introduction of public hearings was widely acknowledged to have had a real impact on the process, and to have played an important role in establishing **António Guterres** as the frontrunner in the first half of 2016. Most importantly, the fact that the UN Security Council was able to come to an early consensus behind António Guterres is a hopeful sign that he will command the confidence and respect of UN member states and prove to be a strong and effective Secretary-General. The Elders welcomed his appointment and plan to maintain a dialogue with him in his new role.

In addition to supporting efforts to make the Secretary-General selection process more transparent, The Elders also played a prominent role in arguing that the Secretary-General should in future be appointed to a **single, longer term in office**, rather than the current custom of Secretaries-General serving two five-year terms. Although this change was ultimately not adopted in 2016, The Elders continue to believe that a single term would strengthen the independence of the Secretary-General by ensuring that the post-holder is not constrained by the need to get the support of the P5 to run for re-election.

“When the UN Security Council speaks with one voice, that voice is powerful.”

Kofi Annan



Photo: UN Photo / Victoria Hazou

**Lakhdar Brahimi** and **Mary Robinson** released an op-ed arguing in favour of the single term in July 2016, which was published in a number of major global newspapers including the *South China Morning Post*, *Kommersant*, *the Times of India*, *El Pais* and *Al Hayat*. Lakhdar Brahimi was also invited by the President of the UN General Assembly to participate in a private brainstorming retreat on the Secretary-General selection process in January 2016. The Elders additionally used social media to engage with Secretary-General candidates and encourage them to support the single term proposal ahead of the General Assembly hearings in April 2016.

On the issue of the use of the veto in the Security Council, The Elders released a short, hard-hitting video in collaboration with the **Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect** and **Amnesty International** in June 2016. This was timed to coincide with the **World Humanitarian Summit** in Istanbul, and was screened at a high-level side event at the Summit organised by the Government of Liechtenstein. The video emphasised The Elders' core messages that the UN Security Council has a responsibility to prevent mass atrocities from taking place, and that it must make greater efforts to work together in a collaborative and constructive way, putting aside partisan and national interests.

Elders also participated in a number of high-level forums to promote their positions on Strengthening the UN. In January 2016, **Martti Ahtisaari** and **Lakhdar**

**Brahimi** participated in the **Youth & Leaders Summit** at **Sciences Po**, on “*The Agenda of the Future United Nations Secretary-General*”. This was an inspiring opportunity for Elders to discuss the challenges facing the UN and how to strengthen it with students and global leaders attending the summit.

The Elders also used the **UN high-level week** in September to participate in two side events relating to the Strengthening the UN initiative. **Gro Harlem Brundtland** and **Martti Ahtisaari** both spoke on a panel event organised jointly by The Elders and the **Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT)** group of countries, which discussed changes to the Secretary-General selection process and the need to maintain momentum behind additional future reforms. **Martti Ahtisaari** also participated on a panel organised by the Governments of Liechtenstein, France and Mexico to discuss veto restraint and preventing mass atrocities.

The Elders were encouraged to see that their interventions have been warmly welcomed by many UN member states, UN officials, and representatives of civil society. This highlights the seriousness with which the Strengthening the UN initiative has been received and the high degree of interest that exists for securing reforms to the UN's peace and security organs. The Elders intend to continue to speak out in promoting positive, forward-looking changes to the UN Security Council and the wider UN system.

## BUILDING PEACE & TACKLING ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT



Photo: ODI / The Elders

The Elders believe that all conflicts are capable of being resolved with sufficient political will. Throughout 2016 they sought opportunities both in public and private to support peacebuilding, and to address the root causes of wars and unrest.

The agony of **Syria's** war loomed large throughout the year. The Elders issued four statements in support of the peace process led by the **UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura**. These condemned the paralysis in the Security Council and the attacks against civilians and aid convoys and other violations of international humanitarian law, particularly in the besieged city of Aleppo. The Elders held discussions with key interlocutors including de Mistura and then-UN Deputy Secretary-General **Jan Eliasson** at the UN General Assembly in New York in September on how to balance the often-competing humanitarian, human rights and peace-making demands.

The conflict in **Israel and Palestine** is a priority for The Elders. Over the past year, they offered their support to diplomatic efforts led by the French Government to keep the **two-state solution** alive through high-level conferences in Paris in June and in January 2017. They also welcomed the UN Security Council Resolution in December that called on Israel to immediately halt all settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Elders also paid tribute in September to the late **Shimon Peres**, former Israeli President and Nobel Peace Laureate with whom they had met during trips to the region in 2009 and 2012, highlighting his tireless efforts in support of a two-state solution.

A continuing focus of attention for The Elders in 2016 was the regional rivalry between **Iran and Saudi Arabia**; contacts were maintained, with a view to an eventual Elders' return trip to the region when the time is ripe. In January they issued a press release welcoming the lifting of sanctions against Iran as part of the implementation of the **P5+1 nuclear deal**, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which they continued to support throughout the year.

To explore the root causes of conflicts across the **Middle East**, The Elders co-hosted a panel discussion at the **Overseas Development Institute (ODI)** in London in May. The panel discussion featured **Lakhdar Brahimi** and **Hina Jilani** alongside **Sara Pantuliano**, Managing Director of ODI's Humanitarian Policy Group, and **Joost Hiltermann**, Middle East and North Africa Programme Director of the International Crisis Group, and was moderated by the BBC's Chief International Correspondent **Lyse Doucet**. **Jimmy Carter** and **Martti Ahtisaari** responded from the audience to questions posed by Doucet.



Photo: Muath Khatib / The Elders

“Palestinians continue to be denied justice and human rights... equally, Israelis are ill-served by a government that promotes illegal settlements and flouts international law.”

**Jimmy Carter**

Since the organisation was founded in 2007, The Elders have been concerned about the deteriorating situation in **Zimbabwe**. In July, concerned at renewed political infighting and hoping to contribute to a peaceful transfer of power from President Mugabe, **Kofi Annan**, **Graça Machel** and **Desmond Tutu** wrote privately, on behalf of The Elders, to the leaders of the **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** ahead of their annual Summit. The letter urged them to support a “*successful and inclusive transition*” in Zimbabwe that would return stability and growth to the country. The letter was welcomed by opposition groups and some heads of state in the region.

Throughout 2016 The Elders continued to monitor and speak out on conflicts in **Burundi**, reflecting the involvement of **Nelson Mandela** in brokering the Arusha Accords which ended that country's civil war in the 2000s. They also publicly supported the peace

agreement in **Colombia** between **President Santos's** government and the FARC guerrillas as a model for other conflicts. **Kofi Annan** and **Ernesto Zedillo** represented The Elders at a signing ceremony in Cartagena in September. When the deal was initially rejected in a referendum in October, The Elders urged continued support for President Santos's efforts. They welcomed its eventual adoption by Colombia's National Assembly and warmly congratulated President Santos on winning the **Nobel Peace Prize** in December.

The Elders were distressed at continuing violence in **Myanmar** in 2016 and offered their full support to **Kofi Annan** when he accepted the request by **Aung San Suu Kyi** to chair an independent **Advisory Commission on Rakhine State**. Due to complete its work in late 2017, the Commission is focused primarily on the parlous situation of the **Rohingya** Muslim minority in Myanmar.

# REFUGEES & MIGRATION

In 2016, The Elders increased their focus on **refugees and migration** as a global challenge. While events on and around the Mediterranean in 2015 rightly attracted the world's attention, The Elders sought to highlight that this was far from only being a European issue. From the world's largest migration corridor in Central America, to the world's largest refugee camp in Kenya, to Rohingya people in Myanmar and Bangladesh taking to the Andaman Sea to flee persecution, the challenges faced are global and require a global response.

Accordingly, among the key messages that The Elders emphasised in 2016 were the need for **global responsibility-sharing**, and the moral imperative that compassion and cooperation take precedence over containment and closed borders.



Photo: Gordon Welters / The Elders

To amplify the voices of the vulnerable, in May The Elders produced a video in collaboration with the UN refugee agency, **UNHCR**, in which Syrian refugees asked questions about their future to **Kofi Annan**, **Lakhdar Brahimi** and **Filippo Grandi**, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

In September, The Elders set out their public positions by launching a new report *"In Challenge Lies Opportunity: How the World Must Respond to Refugees and Mass Migration"*. The report elaborates **four key principles** that The Elders argue should be at the heart of a coherent international response to the refugee and migration challenge: improved **response mechanisms**; enhanced **assistance to major refugee-hosting countries**; increased opportunities for **resettlement** and other forms of admission to safe countries; and respect for **international law, human rights and refugee protection**.

**Germany** was chosen as the venue for the launch of the report, in recognition of the exemplary role that it had played in opening its borders to people fleeing violence and persecution in 2015. **Martti Ahtisaari**, **Kofi Annan** and **Lakhdar Brahimi** presented the report and discussed issues related to refugees and migration in meetings with German Foreign Minister **Frank-Walter Steinmeier** and President **Joachim Gauck**. The Elders heard first-hand from refugees at a temporary accommodation centre in Berlin. **Richard Branson**, Patron and Advisory Council member, joined the meeting with Foreign Minister Steinmeier and hosted a dinner with the **B Team**, at which business leaders discussed with the Elders how they could best help refugees and develop a more positive narrative on the economic benefits of migration.

"The world can - and must - do more to protect refugees and migrants, and ensure that their basic human rights are respected in the process."

Hina Jilani



Photo: UNHCR / Achilleas Zavallis



Photo: Gordon Welters / The Elders



The launch of *In Challenge Lies Opportunity* was timed to immediately precede the **UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants** at the UN General Assembly in September. The Elders welcomed the Summit but urged member states to commit to binding targets to ensure that responsibility would be truly shared, warning that *"it is actions that count, not words"*. **Hina Jilani** repeated this message in her op-ed published in the *Huffington Post* two days before the Summit.

Three Elders spoke at thematic roundtables at the Summit. **Martti Ahtisaari** stressed the need to uphold and improve protection of vulnerable refugees and migrants. In her comments, **Hina Jilani** reiterated

the need for responsibility-sharing and respect of international law. **Mary Robinson** discussed the drivers of migration, highlighting in particular the growing issue of displacement caused by climate change.

Underlining once more the priority they place on amplifying the voices of the vulnerable – alongside their high-level interventions such as the UN Summit – the Elders met resettled refugees at the headquarters of the **International Rescue Committee** in New York. **Gro Harlem Brundtland**, **Mary Robinson** and **Hina Jilani** heard testimonies from refugees from around the world who had made the United States their new home. The Elders also discussed the IRC's important work with its President and CEO **David Miliband** and former US Secretary of State **Madeleine Albright**, herself a refugee from Czechoslovakia who is Overseer of the IRC's Board.

Throughout 2016, The Elders' work on refugees and migration became increasingly relevant in the context of rising **isolationist and xenophobic narratives**. At their October Board Meeting, the Elders agreed to continue to advocate in 2017 for greater responsibility-sharing, protection of the vulnerable and human rights. As their report states, *"The Elders believe that in challenge lies opportunity"*. As the challenges mount, so it becomes ever more important to seize the opportunity to assert the need for **humanity, solidarity and compassion** as the guiding principles driving refugee and migration policy.

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Elders approached their work on these topics in 2016 buoyed by the successes of the previous twelve months; most crucially the adoption of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** by the United Nations in New York in September 2015, and the **Paris Agreement** on climate change at the COP21 summit in December 2015.

In both cases, the focus for 2016 was on **implementation** of these agreements, and holding signatories to their word. In July, The Elders issued a statement expressing concern that none of the top ten carbon-emitting countries had ratified the Paris Agreement and that G20 leaders were still making investment decisions contrary to the agreement, such as continued support for fossil fuel subsidies. The Elders were then heartened by progress in the second half of the year with ratification of the agreement and leadership from the countries of the Climate Vulnerable Forum at the COP22 in Marrakech in November.



Photo: Asian Development Bank



The Elders believe that both climate change and sustainable development need a **holistic** policy approach that respects, listens to and incorporates the voices of civil society and grassroots activists. In 2016 they helped amplify these voices through guest blogs from sustainable development advocates from the Marshall Islands, Costa Rica and Finland, and through participation in the **Social Good Summit** in New York in September. **Gro Harlem Brundtland** and **Mary Robinson** both attended the Summit and engaged in dialogue with climate and youth activists from around the world.

Photo: Stuart Ramson / UN Foundation

“Climate change is the biggest issue of human solidarity in the world today”

Mary Robinson



Photo: Tony Webster / Flickr



# UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

In May The Elders launched their new initiative on **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**. UHC is a target within the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on health and, The Elders believe, the best way to achieve the health SDG overall. For The Elders, this new initiative is a specific way for the organisation to contribute to the implementation of the SDGs and to champion the needs and rights of women and girls.

The launch took place at **“Women Deliver”**, the world’s largest conference on the health, rights and wellbeing of women and girls, held in Copenhagen in 2016. **Gro Harlem Brundtland**, **Hina Jilani** and **Graça Machel** hosted a panel discussion attended by a mixture of media, grassroots activists, and policy experts from, for example, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank. They launched a Position Paper on UHC and spoke about The Elders’ four key messages:

- UHC is the best way to achieve the health SDG;
- UHC delivers substantial health, economic and political benefits;
- Women, children and adolescents must be covered as a priority;
- Public financing is the key to UHC.

The launch was accompanied by an op-ed by **Gro Harlem Brundtland** and **Graça Machel** outlining The Elders’ commitment to UHC and urging **G7 leaders** to support it at their May summit in Japan. This was published in international media (including the *Huffington Post*, *Le Monde* and *Die Welt*), and in publications in countries The Elders believe could make faster progress towards UHC (the *Mail & Guardian* in South Africa, *This Day* in Nigeria, the *Myanmar Times*, and *The Jakarta Globe* in Indonesia).

“Women, children and adolescents make up the majority of our populations. It makes sense to prioritise those who have been left behind, to be the entry point to achieve Universal Health Coverage.”

Graça Machel



Photo: Stuart Ramson / UN Foundation



“Universal health care is an achievable goal, if politicians have the courage to challenge vested interests.”

Jimmy Carter

Photo: Pippa Ranger/Department for International Development

To champion this new initiative, a short film on UHC was produced together with five one-minute clips for use on social media. The film features **Kofi Annan**, **Jimmy Carter**, **Gro Harlem Brundtland**, **Mary Robinson**, **Hina Jilani** and **Ernesto Zedillo** speaking about why they believe UHC is important. It was shown at Women Deliver and then at other events, for example at the **World Health Assembly** in Geneva in May and at the **Social Good Summit** in New York in September. It has also been edited by health campaigning organisations with Japanese and French subtitles to reach a wider global audience. The short films have been extensively disseminated through Twitter at key moments.

Following the launch in May, The Elders continued to champion UHC in 2016 through events, speeches, social media and letters to leaders in target countries.

In August, **Graça Machel** and **Ricardo Lagos** authored an op-ed urging African leaders attending the **Tokyo Conference on African Development (TICAD)** to support UHC. This was published in *Le Monde*, the *Huffington Post*, leading outlets in Nigeria, South Africa, Ethiopia, Senegal, and in other pan-African publications. The Elders marked **UHC Day** (12 December) with a joint op-ed by **Gro Harlem Brundtland** and **Margaret Chan**, Director-General of WHO, which was published by the *Thomson Reuters Foundation* and the *Huffington Post* and promoted across The Elders’ and WHO’s social media and online platforms.

# UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE



# EQUALITY FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN



**Mary Robinson** gave a keynote speech on UHC at an event at the High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs in July and, in September, **Gro Harlem Brundtland** gave a keynote at a high-level side event organised by WHO in New York, joining Margaret Chan and the health ministers of South Africa and Thailand. She also emphasised the importance of UHC in a discussion on health at the Social Good Summit (organised by the UN Foundation), livestreamed to a global audience and heard by an enthusiastic gathering of activists and civil society representatives in New York.

To advocate for specific reforms to progress UHC, The Elders sent **private letters** and policy memoranda to the heads of state in **Ghana, Tanzania and Kenya**. When **Kofi Annan** met **President Jokowi** of Indonesia in Jakarta in December ahead of the Bali Democracy Forum, he presented a letter on behalf of The Elders congratulating **Indonesia** on its UHC reforms to date, and suggesting steps it could take to ensure full population coverage by 2019. President Jokowi has since replied positively to this letter. The Elders also wrote privately to the expert group tasked by the UN with recommending the indicators to be used to measure progress towards the SDGs. This was to urge adoption of an appropriate indicator for UHC, and The Elders were pleased when the expert group changed its position and adopted an appropriate indicator.

The Elders' new UHC Initiative has been warmly welcomed by the **global health community**, which is increasingly recognising the importance of political leadership in launching and sustaining UHC reforms.

**Equality for girls and women** is a cornerstone of The Elders' commitment to securing dignity and rights for all. It informs every aspect of their work and helps determine their priorities for action. From Universal Health Coverage to climate change and mass migration, to peacebuilding and defending human rights protectors, The Elders believe that girls and women have specific needs that demand appropriately-tailored policy responses, but also that their voices need to be heard and respected by policymakers.

On **International Women's Day 2016**, The Elders helped amplify women's voices on **climate change** and **sustainable development** through a guest blog by **Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner**, a young climate activist from the Marshall Islands, that was promoted through a video dialogue with **Mary Robinson**.

Over the past five years, Girls Not Brides has developed into a fully-fledged and independent civil society alliance, and **Mary Robinson** and **Gro Harlem Brundtland** celebrated its accomplishments at a reception in New York held on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September 2016.



In November, The Elders joined the global, digital "16 Days of Activism" campaign to mark the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women**. Targeted communications on social media highlighted key messages of support over the years by different Elders for women's rights and dignity, including **Jimmy Carter** on recognising the scale of the problem, **Gro Harlem Brundtland** on defeating deep-rooted discrimination, and **Ela Bhatt** on addressing economic injustice.

The Elders remain committed to the global fight against **child marriage** – an issue where they have acted as catalysts for change since 2011, when they founded the **Girls Not Brides** campaign. In July they welcomed decisions by leaders in The Gambia, Tanzania and Uganda to end or curb child marriage, as part of the African Union's continent-wide campaign to eradicate the harmful practice.



# FINANCIAL REVIEW

FOR THE YEAR TO  
31 DECEMBER 2016



The Elders' unrestricted income for the year was £2.4 million (2015: £4.1 million), a decrease of £1.7 million on the prior year, with a net surplus for the year of £0.3 million (2015: £1.7 million).

In 2015, The Elders received an additional contribution of £1.0 million to rebuild reserves and stabilise the financial position of The Elders up to the end of the current four-year strategic plan in 2017, and in anticipation of a reduction in funding from some existing funders in 2016. An updated fund-raising strategy is being developed to support the future funding of the organisation.

Costs relate primarily to the delivery of a global programme of activities agreed by the Elders at their biannual board meetings, supported by a Secretariat based in London. This London office provides the Elders with policy research, conducts advocacy and communications work, and is responsible for logistics and other support activities. During 2016 The Elders spent £2.0 million (2015: £2.4 million), a decrease of £0.4 million or 17% on the prior year. This reduction reflects the varying pattern of expenditure, resulting from different levels and types of engagement from year to year and the long-term nature of our various initiatives.

The Elders ended 2016 with total unrestricted reserves of £3.8 million (2015: £3.4 million), representing approximately 15 months' expenditure (based on budgeted expenditure for the next 15 months). The Elders has a reserves policy of retaining at least nine months' expenditure. The Board considers this level of reserves appropriate to enable good financial management and planning, taking account of the concentration of funders that the organisation currently has. All the charity's reserves are unrestricted.

The following financial information does not constitute the company's statutory accounts, but is extracted therefrom. The statutory accounts dealing with the 2016 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 2016

	Note	2016 £000	2015 £000
<b>INCOME FROM:</b>			
Donations and grants		2,372	4,123
Interest income		9	5
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>2,381</b>	<b>4,123</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON:</b>			
<b>Costs of generating funds</b>	2	<b>179</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>	2		
P5 Engagement & Strengthening of the UN		355	598
Refugees and Migrants		359	-
UHC and Equality for Girls and Women		327	228
Ethical Leadership & Elders & Youngers		10	100
Africa		186	222
Middle East		230	475
Myanmar		203	325
Climate Change & SDGs		188	353
<b>Total charitable activities expenditure</b>		<b>1,858</b>	<b>2,301</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>2,037</b>	<b>2,400</b>
<b>Net income and net movement in funds</b>		<b>344</b>	<b>1,728</b>
<b>Fund balances brought forward</b>		<b>3,445</b>	<b>1,717</b>
<b>FUND BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<b>3,789</b>	<b>3,445</b>

There are no gains or losses other than those shown above.  
All income and expenditure during 2016 and 2015 was unrestricted.

## THE ELDERS FOUNDATION BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2016

	Note	2016 £000	2015 £000
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Tangible assets	7	61	103
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Debtors	8	71	61
Cash at bank and in hand		3,704	3,590
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>3,775</b>	<b>3,651</b>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	9	(47)	(309)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>3,728</b>	<b>3,342</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>3,789</b>	<b>3,445</b>
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>		<b>3,789</b>	<b>3,445</b>
<b>THE FUNDS OF THE CHARITY:</b>			
Unrestricted funds		3,789	3,445
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>		<b>3,789</b>	<b>3,445</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

**Jean Oelwang**  
Virgin Unite

**Jeff Skoll**  
Skoll Foundation

**Peter Gabriel**  
The Peter Gabriel Trust

**Pam Omidyar**  
Humanity United

**Marieke van Schaik**  
Dutch Postcode Lottery

**Kathy Bushkin Calvin**  
United Nations Foundation

**Mabel van Oranje**  
Girls Not Brides

**Lulit Solomon**  
Jeremy Coller Foundation

**Jeremy Coller**  
Jeremy Coller Foundation

**Sally Osberg**  
Skoll Foundation

**Amy Towers**  
The Nduna Foundation

**Randy Newcomb**  
Humanity United

**Shannon Sedgwick Davis**  
Bridgeway Foundation

**Jeff Towers**  
The Nduna Foundation

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

- Bridgeway Foundation
- Chandra Jessee
- Dutch Postcode Lottery
- Humanity United
- Jeremy Coller Foundation
- Skoll Foundation
- The Nduna Foundation
- The Peter Gabriel Trust
- Virgin Unite



Photo: 8SP/Simon Luethi



Photo: ODI / The Elders



Photo: Ben Hartschuh / GH Prime Media



Photo: Manuel Braun / Sciences Po



Photo: Gordon Welters / The Elders



Photo: ODI / The Elders

“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

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#### The Elders Foundation

149 Hammersmith Road London W14 0QL +44 (0) 207 013 4646  
Registered charity in England and Wales. Reg. No. 1132397

Published in 2017 > Designed by [coastline.agency](http://coastline.agency)

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