



The Elders

Ethical
leadership
in a rapidly
changing world

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2014-17

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“The Elders can speak freely and boldly, working both publicly and behind the scenes. They will support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict and inspire hope where there is despair.”

NELSON MANDELA, 2007



Our world is changing rapidly – in many ways it is already very different to the world into which The Elders was launched in 2007. Now, six years on, it is time to take stock, to revitalise our vision, refocus our activities, and to set clear goals for the next four years.

INTRODUCTION

Our world is changing rapidly – in many ways it is already very different to the world into which The Elders was launched in 2007. Now, six years on, it is time to take stock, to revitalise our vision, refocus our activities, and to set clear goals for the next four years.

This document is the product of an intensive planning process that began with a review of The Elders' vision, mission and values in the context of today's world. The Strategic Framework is based on an analysis of strengths and weaknesses, together with the challenges and opportunities we face.

It is particularly appropriate that our starting point should have been a consideration of our values, because The Elders was born out of a profound desire to uphold and protect universal human values – values embodied by our founding Elder, Nelson Mandela, whose vision continues to be our core source of inspiration.

When we consider the global context in which we operate, and the many complex challenges we confront, it is clear that the world needs its Elders today like never before.

A WORLD OF COMPLEX CHALLENGES...

We live in a world in which:

- Growing inequality is holding back development, as well as leading to civil unrest and conflict.
- A prolonged global financial crisis is shifting attention from international to domestic issues, fomenting nationalism and xenophobia.
- Scepticism and disillusionment with political leadership is widespread.
- Failure of governance at all levels is leaving fertile ground for transnational crime, such as human trafficking, trading in drugs and illicit arms.
- Human rights, gender equality and human development are threatened by rising religious fundamentalism.
- Chronic long-term conflicts remain frozen and forgotten.
- Our inability to tackle climate change threatens to halt or even reverse progress towards poverty eradication.

...AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

But today's world also presents many new opportunities:

- Growing civil society activism is becoming a powerful force for change.
- Increasing awareness of universal values and the need for ethical leadership is supporting the development of more inclusive, democratic systems.

- The digital revolution is providing unprecedented access to information and communications.

If The Elders are to seize these opportunities and make an effective contribution to tackling global challenges, our work must be sharply focused on our core strengths, and the areas where we can have the greatest impact.

The Elders have therefore adopted three key goals with supporting strategies that will form a framework for the organisation's activities through to 2017.

Goal One is aimed at inspiring ethical leadership and sound global governance through broader participation, equality for girls and women, and more effective international institutions. Goal Two details The Elders' continuing role as peace-builders, working through private diplomacy and public advocacy to promote dialogue and reconciliation in the Middle East and other chronic conflict situations. Goal Three focuses on eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development, through campaigns that highlight inequality, injustice and the impact of climate change.

Together, these goals provide a concrete expression of the values that inspire us. They will serve as our roadmap as we continue our journey towards the achievement of The Elders' vision: a world free from war and poverty.

GOAL **1**
**A JUST AND
INCLUSIVE GLOBAL
COMMUNITY**

INSPIRING ETHICAL
LEADERSHIP AND
SOUND GLOBAL
GOVERNANCE

GOAL **2**
**FREEDOM
FROM FEAR**

BUILDING PEACE
AND TACKLING
THE ROOT CAUSES
OF CONFLICT

GOAL **3**
**FREEDOM
FROM WANT**

ERADICATING
POVERTY AND
PROMOTING
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

VISION

Our vision is of a world where people live in peace, conscious of their common humanity and their shared responsibilities for each other, for the planet and for future generations. We see a world in which there is universal respect for human rights; in which poverty has been eliminated; in which people are free from fear and oppression and are able to fulfil their true potential.

MISSION

The Elders will 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 will 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.

“A world where people live in peace, conscious of their common humanity and their shared responsibilities”



Jacob Silberberg/Panos Pictures



“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”

Nelson Mandela

VALUES

INTEGRITY

We uphold and promote the highest standards of integrity in leadership and service, including honesty, transparency and accountability.

COURAGE

We have the courage to act boldly with confidence and conviction, speaking truth to power, challenging unjust systems and harmful traditional practices, and promoting peace.

COMPASSION

We are driven by compassion, care and solidarity for those suffering conflict, poverty and oppression. With respect for human dignity we seek to empower individuals to claim and protect their human rights.

EQUALITY

Conscious of our common humanity, we believe in equal rights for all. We work to create fairer, more just societies, promoting tolerance, inclusiveness and understanding.

PERSEVERANCE

We aim to keep hope alive in protracted and neglected conflict situations and recognise the need for perseverance and determination. We take the long view and strive to ensure the sustainability and continuity of our work.

GOAL
1

**A JUST AND INCLUSIVE
GLOBAL COMMUNITY**

INSPIRING ETHICAL
LEADERSHIP AND SOUND
GLOBAL GOVERNANCE



The Elders will encourage the highest standards of integrity among leaders of all kinds, and promote the development of new approaches to global governance for the benefit of all humanity and future generations.

STRATEGIES

- 1.** We will challenge the effectiveness of existing international institutions, urge them to become more representative and accountable, and encourage the creation of new multilateral approaches to meet the needs of the 21st century.
- 2.** The Elders will use their convening power to build a meaningful discussion about global citizenship, helping to empower individuals, youth and civil society groups, so that they play a role in global governance.
- 3.** In light of the growing importance of online communication globally, we will advocate for the concrete protection of human rights online.

4. The Elders will lead by example and use their influence to promote the social and economic benefits of ethical leadership. We will amplify the voices of and support ethical leaders, particularly among the young, all over the world.

5. We will bring together government, business and civil society leaders in order to explore how they can interact in ways that promote the broader interests of the people they serve and the communities where they work, notably the poorest and marginalised.

6. We will promote equality for girls and women.

HORIZON 2017 WHAT WE HOPE WILL HAVE CHANGED

Global institutions have become more participatory and inclusive.

Ethical leadership is acknowledged as a 'win-win' policy – beneficial for leaders and their people.

The Elders have established a co-operative forum for those concerned with the protection of human rights online, promoting the right to freedom of expression online without fear of surveillance or censorship.

We will be developing a fellowship/mentoring programme that enables youth and aspiring leaders to meet with the Elders and work on projects with The Elders Team and Elders' foundations.

We will be promoting ethical leadership through publications and events that communicate the Elders' wisdom and collective experience.

GOAL **2**

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

**BUILDING PEACE AND
TACKLING THE ROOT
CAUSES OF CONFLICT**



The Elders will use their influence and experience to help resolve and prevent conflicts, and to build enduring peace.

STRATEGIES

1. The Elders will identify 3-4 chronic conflict situations in which they can effectively use private diplomacy to promote dialogue and reconciliation, engaging with all sides, leaders, policy makers and activists, as well as the disempowered and disenfranchised.

2. The Elders will continue to work with perseverance and determination towards a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and engage on the ground, reaffirming the need for a two-state solution.

3. We will use public advocacy and The Elders' convening power to bring global attention to neglected issues underpinning conflict, prioritising humanitarian needs and building a common vision for peaceful and inclusive societies.

4. We will encourage greater assumption of responsibility for conflict resolution by the broader global community, in particular emerging regional powers. We will promote increased participation by women in peace building.

5. We will be attentive to evolving situations and identify opportunities where our intervention might prevent the development or escalation of a conflict. We will establish criteria for short-term engagement by The Elders.

HORIZON 2017 WHAT WE HOPE WILL HAVE CHANGED

At least one chronic conflict situation is closer to a resolution.

Progress towards a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is back on track.

Established and emerging powers are working more closely together to resolve conflicts.

There is greater awareness of how poverty, inequality and injustice can lead to conflict.

GOAL
3

FREEDOM FROM WANT

**ERADICATING POVERTY AND
PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**



The Elders will advocate for a more equitable world – a world free from extreme poverty that will continue to support future generations.

STRATEGIES

- 1.** We will place the issue of equity at the heart of our advocacy on poverty eradication, recognising that extreme inequalities in wealth, opportunity and power relationships are major obstacles to human development and contribute to conflict.
- 2.** We will highlight the impact of climate change, and the degradation of natural resources, particularly on poor people, and emphasise the need for inter-generational justice – not expecting future generations to pay for present irresponsibility.

3. We will capitalise on The Elders' networks and convening power to link up local, national, regional and international actors, including governments, private sector and civil society, in developing innovative and sustainable development initiatives.

4. We will challenge those aspects of cultural and religious traditions, such as patriarchy, that hinder the fulfilment of human rights and human development.

HORIZON 2017 WHAT WE HOPE WILL HAVE CHANGED

The post-2015 development agenda has a strong focus on addressing inequality.

The Elders are making greater use of online and digital technologies to convene dialogue and cooperation on poverty eradication and sustainable development.

The international community is collaborating more effectively to develop urgent solutions and agreements on climate change. The Elders will have used their influence to persuade governments to establish and honour bold and ambitious international agreements on climate change.

Outdated and paternalistic models of international development will have given way to broader, more inclusive and innovative approaches.

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