



Kofi Annan  
FOUNDATION

# BUILDING **PEACEFUL,** **DEMOCRATIC,** AND **RESILIENT** SOCIETIES

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2020-2024





“Today’s borders are not  
between nations, but  
between powerful and  
powerless, free and fettered,  
privileged and humiliated.”

— Kofi Annan

# **RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE**

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR**

In 2020-2024, the world will go through profound changes. The impact of climate change will be more acutely felt, especially by the least affluent, and the economic and social fault lines brought to light by the Covid-19 pandemic will intensify attacks on democracy and democratic values by authoritarians and populists. The rise of nationalist agendas and an aging, multilateral cooperation system will exacerbate the many fragilities of our interconnected world: lack of ethical leadership; weak governance; food insecurity; violence imposed on civilians trapped in conflicts and on marginalised communities; exclusion of women and young people from decision-making; massive loss of stable jobs; ineffective public health systems; and glaring inequalities within and among nations.

Clear roadmaps, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement, have already been drawn to guide us. The resources and expertise - bolstered by the promises of new technologies - exist to address many global challenges, and we can strengthen the capacity of our societies to withstand current and future shocks. But only if we face our common destiny together, as Kofi Annan urged us. Only if these societies are led by legitimate and accountable governments, with democratic and effective institutions that ensure access to food, health, and other essential goods and services for all their citizens. Only if the rights of communities and individuals are protected, if no group is marginalised or disempowered. And only if all stakeholders — including young people, civil society, the private sector, academia and local authorities — are brought together through concerted action at local, national and international levels, can effective, coherent, and integrated responses be designed and applied.

In 2020-2024, the Foundation will carry forward Kofi Annan's vision by using its convening power to spur discussions across generations, regions and sectors, and throw light on difficult issues or remarkable solutions. It will advocate for structured international cooperation and new global partnerships to shape a more peaceful, democratic and resilient world, while acting to strengthen peace, democracy, and leadership in selected regions and countries. It is uniquely placed to do so, because of the weight of its name, its recognised expertise, and its extensive network of influential leaders and partners, which enable it to operate flexibly and cost efficiently.

This Strategic Framework is the result of a year-long participatory process of reflection and consultation, among members of our Board and our staff, with our key partners and donors. We will review it on an on-going basis, and adapt it as our internal and external environments evolve and as new thematic imperatives emerge. We look forward to working with you on implementing it and building a fairer, more peaceful world.

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## **Vision:**

A fairer and more peaceful world, where no one is left behind, democratic principles and the rule of law are upheld, and divides are bridged through dialogue and international cooperation

## **Mission:**

The Kofi Annan Foundation helps build peaceful, democratic, and resilient societies

## **Values:**

The Foundation's work is underpinned by the same courage, integrity, and creativity that characterised Kofi Annan's efforts to resolve even the most intractable of global challenges. We carefully steward his reputation for acting with honesty, fairness, impartiality, and discretion. Inclusion, diversity, gender equality, and sustainability are at the heart of everything we do

## **Impact:**

As a small Foundation, our work is measured through our influence on key actors, as evidenced by changes in their opinions, policies, or behaviours

## HOW AND WHERE WE OPERATE

We convene all stakeholders around the table and forge coalitions of trusted influence. We channel expertise to strengthen democratic processes, transform societies and bolster their capacity to adapt and withstand shocks. We champion non-violence, dialogue, inclusion and reconciliation. And we amplify Kofi Annan's legacy.

Kofi Annan held that solutions to the world's most critical problems and crises could be found with the right combination of will and expertise. Therefore, the Foundation — a small and agile organisation — works in collaboration with a network of partner organisations that share our values and professional standards.

- » Our work spans the range of research, public advocacy, private diplomacy, advisory and operational activities.
- » We are active in international and regional forums as well as on several continents. We prioritise our engagement by focusing on specific areas facing acute challenges, where our networks and influence can achieve real results, while retaining the ability to respond globally when the need arises.
- » Our small core team and flat organisational structure ensure that we work fast and can anticipate emerging trends or respond to sudden crises.
- » We use working methods that are solution-oriented, iterative and well-considered. We test our professional judgement through critical reflection and review with peers and stakeholders.
- » We engage carefully to ensure that the people with whom we work can maintain the highest levels of trust in the Foundation.
- » We have well-established programmes to deliver on our strategic objectives, but are open to new partnerships for innovative initiatives which can contribute to building peaceful, democratic, and resilient societies.
- » We validate the value of these programmes through evidence-based reporting, critical peer reviews, and external fact-finding or evaluation.

# STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

Strategic objective: to strengthen democracy and elections, because popular legitimacy provides the basis for democratic governance, accountability, and respect for human rights and the rule of law, which are the foundations for fair and peaceful societies.

## CONTEXT

Some 115 national elections are due to be held worldwide in the 2020-2024 period. Each election is not only a choice of leaders, but also a test of democratic legitimacy. Surveys show that most people around the world continue to see democracy as vital. However, the poor quality and questionable legitimacy of many elections, and the inability of many governments to deliver public goods and services or to prepare adequately for impending health, food and climate crises have created disillusionment. Against this background, autocratic models of government are competing aggressively with democratic forms of political expression. Threats to electoral democracy and international cooperation are magnified by the manipulation and mobilisation of populations through digital media, which has facilitated the spread of disinformation, increased the prevalence of hate speech, and exacerbated pre-existing polarization. In the absence of trusted impartial sources of truth and analysis, popular opinion may be swayed by political influences which are not transparent, reliable, or accountable. The decline in democratic practice increases the risk of armed conflict, with its associated displacement and human suffering.

## ACTIONS

- » We will push for the adoption of the critical policy recommendations by the Kofi Annan Commission on Elections and Democracy in the Digital Age.
- » We will actively back the implementation of electoral reforms to enhance the credibility, legitimacy, and integrity of electoral processes in selected countries/regions of strategic importance facing fraught elections and/or transition to democratic rule.
- » We will facilitate high-level dialogues and consultations to address election-related crises, and we will encourage pre-electoral peace pledges when appropriate.
- » We will support democratic institutions and civil society organisations that work to protect electoral integrity.
- » Working with our technical network of acknowledged election experts and high-level panel of senior states people, we will support democratic institutions and civil society organisations that act to protect electoral integrity.

**“We must make democratic systems more effective, and more responsive to the needs of average citizens. In the face of growing cynicism towards democracy, we must not yield but, on the contrary, defend and champion the values and virtues of democracy.”**

**— Kofi Annan**

# PROMOTING YOUTH LEADERSHIP

**Strategic objective: to facilitate youth engagement and ensure that young people’s voices are heard, because they are active agents of change and must be given the opportunity to shape the world they will inherit.**

## CONTEXT

Half of the globe’s population is under the age of thirty. Young people are uniquely placed to bring positive change in society. Recent years have shown them engaging in large numbers in favour of climate action or against racism. They have a good understanding of social media and new technologies, tools that can be used to catalyse collective action, although they are also particularly exposed to disinformation and extremist propaganda. They have the energy, creativity and idealism to challenge entrenched patterns of exclusion and injustice. Yet only six per cent of parliamentarians worldwide were less than 35 in 2019, leaving a generation of adults to be represented by their ageing parents and grandparents. As a result, policy responses are not designed to address the particular needs of young people, who are three times as likely as older adults to be unemployed. We know that social, political and economic exclusion are the main drivers of violence among younger generations. The Covid-19 pandemic has created a perfect storm for extremists worldwide, who are exploiting uncertainty and fear to reinforce their rhetoric and enrol new young recruits into violent action.

## ACTIONS

- » We will expand our Extremely Together (ET) Initiative, which combines public advocacy, capacity-building, and practice-based learning to support youth leadership in preventing violent extremism globally and in strategic regions.
  - › New national chapters will be established to equip young people to resist the violent narratives of extremist groups and take actions to promote unity in their communities.
  - › Building on ET’s wide digital audience, we will launch a Global Mobilization Campaign to disrupt recruitment by violent extremist groups and provide an attractive alternative focused on youth-led positive civic actions.
  - › ET will pursue wide consultations to offer a platform for young people to express their grievances and develop solutions to the Covid-19 crisis and other pressing challenges, such as economic inclusion through decent jobs and the mental health impact of violence on young people.
- » We will connect young leaders to policy-makers and experts, facilitate their participation in high-level events, and foster mutual learning and dialogue between generations. This will help build the leadership skills and foundational values of young change-makers in line with the values of Kofi Annan, while providing more experienced leaders with the opportunity to understand the concerns and change strategies of young people.

**“Any society that does not succeed in tapping into the energy and creativity of its youth will be left behind.”**

**— Kofi Annan**

# BUILDING PEACE & TRUST

**Strategic objective: to enhance transitions to peace, promote reconciliation, and build trust and cohesion within societies, because it strengthens their ability to withstand future political, economic, social or environmental shocks.**

## CONTEXT

The successive economic, environmental, and health shocks of the last decades have had a disproportionate impact on marginalised groups and individuals and have undermined citizens' trust in state institutions. As a result, there will be a great need in 2020-2024 to strengthen the social fabric in many countries, increase governments' accountability and restore confidence in their willingness to treat everyone equally and in their ability to deliver a safe future for all. This will be particularly important in divided societies emerging from violent conflict. They will have to deal with urgent needs linked to food insecurity, massive losses of jobs, and the impact of climate change, while addressing the legacy of the past: widespread human rights violations, continuing communal or ethnic tensions, the collapse of the justice system, the failure of the security services and the erosion of state legitimacy. Studies have shown that in fifty per cent of cases, fighting resumes in the first decade after the end of a conflict. Healing from the past and building a peaceful and democratic future requires innovative and comprehensive approaches that encompass truth-seeking, reconciliation, and accountability for past human rights violations.

## ACTIONS

- » We will develop a “Building Peace” online platform to strengthen the capacity of the peacebuilding and mediation community. The platform will make the Foundation’s resources on truth commissions, reconciliation, and accountability available to a wide range of actors in regions affected by conflict, mediators, and diplomats. It will be complemented by online and in-person training modules as well as experience-sharing between actors involved in peace processes.
- » We will examine the challenge of delivering accountability for crimes committed during conflicts. Based on case studies and experts’ contributions, we will produce a portfolio of options to support the work of national and international actors in post-conflict contexts.
- » We will support, advise and influence policymakers and practitioners for better design and implementation of transitioning justice processes.
- » We will advocate for a holistic approach to building peace that considers a range of inter-related factors, looking for instance at the nexus between peace, security, public health, and the environment.

**“Peace must be made real and tangible in the daily existence of every individual in need. Peace must be sought above all, because it is the condition for every member of the human family to live a life of dignity and security.”**

**— Kofi Annan**



# AMPLIFYING KOFI ANNAN'S LEGACY

Strategic objective: to raise awareness of Kofi Annan's values and actions, and promote his core belief that structured international cooperation is key to solving challenges in today's interconnected world, because future generations of leaders and social movements can be more effective if they are influenced by his example.

## CONTEXT

The Covid-19 pandemic has laid bare a lack of principled and courageous leadership in many regions of the world and on the international stage. While there have been inspiring instances of solidarity, and while the scientific community has been exemplary in sharing information and resources, decision-making at national and international levels has been mired in hesitation, scapegoating, disinformation and acrimony. Multilateral action, already difficult before the crisis because of the growing assertion of national interests, has been weak and haphazard. Populists and demagogues are increasingly rejecting rules-based multilateral co-operation as inimical to the freedom of the nation state, and contrary to their political ambitions. And yet, as the United Nations has stressed: "Coming out of this crisis will require a whole-of-society, whole-of-government and whole-of-the-world approach driven by compassion and solidarity."<sup>1</sup> This is also true of climate change, which poses an existential threat to all and requires solutions forged and agreed by all. Never before has Kofi Annan's vision of rules-based co-operation and sustainable solutions founded on transparency, fairness and reciprocity, for which he worked so hard, seem so compelling. Never before has his call to bring all stakeholders around the table — including the private sector, local authorities, civil society organisations, academia, and scientists — resonated with so many, who understand that governments alone cannot shape our future. In 2020-2024, therefore, the Foundation will carry forward Kofi Annan's vision, honouring the memory of his life and work, and highlighting the need for new, global and inclusive partnerships.

## ACTIONS

- » We will select initiatives such as lectures, scholarships, awards, publications and exhibitions that commemorate Kofi Annan's life, convey his values and sustain his influence on contemporary events.
- » We will pursue efforts to protect the use of Kofi Annan's name around the world, using intellectual property law and monitoring the use the name globally.
- » We will use the Foundation's convening power to organise discussions on how to reinvigorate mechanisms for multilateral action and incubate new partnerships.
- » We will pursue a small number of focused initiatives launched by Kofi Annan in key areas such as food security, which have acquired greater urgency during the Covid-19 crisis and will expand our work in these areas if the need and opportunity arise.

**"Unlike in the past, when civilizations rose or fell often in a zero-sum game, in today's interconnected world, all countries will rise or fall together."  
— Kofi Annan**

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better, June 2020

# STRATEGIC ENABLERS

## PEOPLE

Our human capital is our most important asset. The Foundation's Board is composed of nine senior leaders from four continents, who bring the highest level of expertise, experience and strategic foresight, as well as their personal influence, to the realisation of this Strategic Framework. They are supported by a small team of 10 to 12 professionals, women and men, from a range of backgrounds in the public and private sectors. We plan to keep staffing at this level in 2020-2024, and will continue to seek diversity and emphasize inclusion. Delivering programmes effectively and efficiently requires this small team to be collaborative, innovative, and energetic; to be well-informed and well-connected; to master skills and competencies in our work areas; to embrace Kofi Annan's values and internalise a culture of respect and continuous improvement. We commit to developing essential knowledge and skills of our staff for the implementation of our strategic objectives.

## PARTNERSHIPS

The Foundation works closely with a wide range of partner organisations including international and regional organisations, foundations, academia and civil society. This gives us access to cutting-edge expertise and allows us to exert influence through our trusted partners. It also allows us to share costs and benefit from economies of scale. In 2020-2024, we will deepen some of our existing partnerships and pursue new ones to ensure co-ordinated action on global efforts for peaceful, democratic, and resilient societies. We will also review our operational networks of international technical experts, develop our high-level panels, and consider establishing new Commissions, a format which has proven effective and impactful for the Foundation.

## FUNDING

The Foundation is funded by public and private donors, including international organisations, national governments, foundations and individuals. In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, we find ourselves, like so many other non-profit organisations, at a crossroads. As a small entity without an endowment or significant financial reserves, the Foundation's ability to achieve its objectives could be constrained in 2020-2024 by the altered funding landscape. Therefore, we will seek to mobilise more institutional and private donors who share our vision and values. We aim to establish multi-year funding partnerships to cover both the cost of programmes and our core operations, while monitoring closely the latter to reduce overheads wherever possible. We will also continue exerting particular care to ensure that funding sources are beyond reproach and offer a clear value-for-money proposition. We envisage an annual budget of CHF 3-4m per annum, in line with expenses in previous years.

## COMMUNICATION

In 2020-2024, the increasing influence of digital technology on decision-makers and their constituents will require the Foundation to adapt its own influencing strategy. If populist leaders are driven by online public opinion trends and their own ambitions, rather than a longer-term vision of the common good, then the Foundation must also influence public opinion trends through digital platforms and harness these for good. The Covid-19 crisis has accelerated the uptake by the Foundation of some of these tools and platforms to engage communities online, support local leaders, and train or equip partners. This shift will continue well beyond the crisis, as it allows the Foundation to reach more actors, in more regions, than ever before.





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