

Kofi Annan sees progress, emphasises challenges facing Côte d'Ivoire

Reconciliation should be pursued in an open and inclusive manner

20 January 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Following a two-day visit to Abidjan, former UN Secretary-General and member of The Elders Kofi Annan noted economic and security improvements in Côte d'Ivoire, however he emphasised the challenges facing the country and repeated The Elders' call for an inclusive reconciliation process.

During his visit on 17 and 18 January, Mr Annan met President Alassane Ouattara, Prime Minister Guillaume Soro and Charles Konan Banny, Chairman of the National Commission for Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation. He also met Bert Koenders, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and head of ONUCI, the UN peacekeeping operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

Speaking at the conclusion of his visit, Mr Annan emphasised that "the task of reconciliation and healing must remain a national priority to help overcome the legacy of the past. I was pleased with the constructive discussion I had with the chairman and members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on ways to deepen and broaden its dialogue and interaction with the public."

He said that reconciliation could not be completed overnight, nor should it be delayed. He added that it must be pursued in an open and inclusive manner to meet the people's expectations.

Mr Annan previously visited Côte d'Ivoire in May 2011 with Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa and Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland, under the auspices of The Elders. During their [May visit](#), the Elders also met President Ouattara and Mr Konan Banny, as well as former President Laurent Gbagbo and representatives of the vibrant Ivorian civil society.

Returning several months later, Mr Annan noted progress in several areas: the economy was reviving, security in Abidjan had improved and the recent legislative elections were generally peaceful.

Mr Annan cautioned however that major challenges still lay ahead as the country seeks to make up for a lost decade.

In separate discussions with the president and the prime minister, Mr Annan underlined the importance of tackling the reform of the security sector.

“This is a complex undertaking, which must be planned and led by the national authorities with the support of the international community. Experience shows that this task cannot be postponed. Security and stability go hand in hand with economic development.”

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The Elders are independent global leaders working together for peace and human rights. The group was founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007.

The Elders are **Martti Ahtisaari, Kofi Annan, Ela Bhatt, Lakhdar Brahimi, Gro Brundtland, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Jimmy Carter, Graça Machel, Mary Robinson** and **Desmond Tutu** (Chair). **Nelson Mandela** and **Aung San Suu Kyi** are honorary Elders.

For biographies of the Elders, blogs, photos, videos and more information about their work please go to www.theElders.org

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