

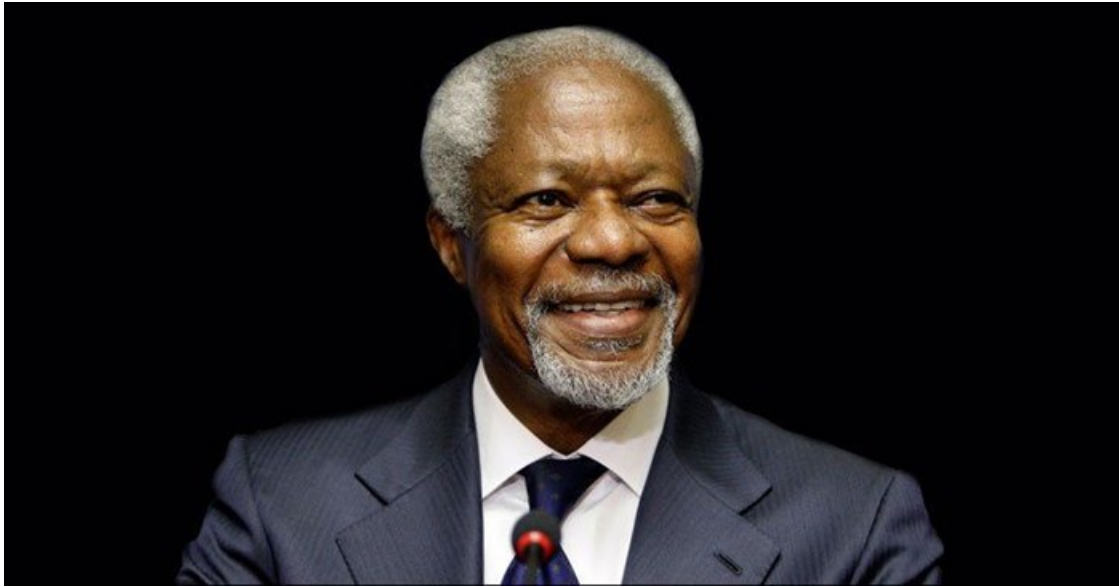
Tributes to Africa's son, Kofi Annan



By [Louise Marsland](#)

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Tributes have poured in after the passing of Ghana's much-loved son and the former Secretary-General of the United Nations and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Kofi A. Annan.



Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General.

The 80-year-old advocate for the African continent, and [seventh Secretary-General](#) who rose through the ranks of the UN, suffered with a short illness before he died, according to news reports.

Speaking from Ivory Coast, the President of the African Development Bank, Akinwumi Adesina, paid tribute to Annan, whom he described as “a distinguished gentleman”.

The Ghanaian diplomat, and one of the United Nations’ most high-profile and well-respected former Secretary-Generals was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize along with the UN, “for their work for a better organised and more peaceful world”.

Annan served as the UN Secretary-General from January 1997 to December 2006 – and put development, human rights, the rule of law, good governance and peace at the top of the UNs agenda, according to reports.

“He was a global icon and a man of peace who stood firmly in support of good governance and accountability for leaders. He was a great personal mentor and father to me. His simplicity, decency, uncommon humility, selflessness and

compassion made him a gem for humanity.

“He was my boss as chairman of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), when I was the vice president for AGRA. He had an infectious passion for ending hunger and poverty in Africa.

“He greatly supported me when I was Minister of Agriculture in Nigeria, when he served as a member of the Eminent Persons Group that helped to support the transformation of agriculture in Nigeria. He energetically co-Chaired the High-level Panel of global leaders to support the African Development Bank in its efforts to accelerate Africa's development.”

“ *Africa has lost a great gem.* ”

Adesina said Annan made Africa “stand tall globally” throughout his long and distinguished career on the world stage. “Africa has lost a great gem. I will greatly miss him and his rich words of wisdom. May his soul rest in peace.”

According to [Deutsche Welle](#), Annan was born into a prominent family in 1938 in Kumasi, the second biggest city in Ghana. His father was governor of Ashanti province under British colonial rule. Annan attended top schools in Ghana, Switzerland and later in the US. He joined the United Nations at the age of 24.

Vera Songwe, executive secretary of the Economic Commission (ECA) for Africa, said Annan's tireless work and devotion to Africa up to the very last day, as he continued to advocate for peace in Zimbabwe, “is exactly what leadership should look like on our continent”.

She hailed him as a “proud son of Africa who became a global champion for peace and all humanity”.

African excellence

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa reflected in his tribute that Annan was a consummate diplomat, who lived a life in service of humanity, as reported on [All Africa](#).

"In becoming the first African UN Secretary-General from Sub Sahara and also the first Secretary-General to rise from within the UN system as a career diplomat, he became a symbol of African excellence and the contribution that Africans were making towards peace, development and human rights throughout the world. Through his tireless efforts, he was instrumental in strengthening and promoting the multilateral system of global governance in the quest to ensure that the people of this world enjoy the freedom as envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations."

From Johannesburg, Brand South Africa issued a statement, paying tribute to his selfless and model leadership.

Commenting, Brand South Africa's chief marketing officer, Linda Magapatona-Sangaret, said: “2018 marks the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela – it is a year which has provided an opportunity for people around the world to reflect on his exceptional leadership. Kofi Annan too was such a great leader, and leaves behind a similar legacy as he dedicated his years in service of human development and peace.”

Annan who delivered the 5thh Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture on 22 July 2007, which focused on the progress of Africa, also served as the chair of the The Elders - an international non-governmental organisation of [public figures](#) noted as elder [statesmen](#), [peace activists](#), and [human rights advocates](#), who were brought together by [Nelson Mandela](#) in 2007.

The goal Nelson Mandela set for the Elders was to use their "almost 1,000 years of joint experience" to work on solutions for seemingly insurmountable problems such as [climate change](#), [HIV/AIDS](#), and poverty, as well as to "use their political independence to help resolve some of the world's most intractable [conflicts](#)".

Annan was a member of The Elders since its founding in 2007, succeeding Desmond Tutu as chair in May 2013. Between February and August 2012 Kofi Annan temporarily recused himself as a member of The Elders during his UN and Arab

League assignment as Joint Special Envoy on the Syrian crisis. Kofi Annan's first engagement with The Elders came in November 2008 when, together with Jimmy Carter and Graça Machel, he drew the world's attention on the humanitarian crisis affecting [Zimbabwe](#).

ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer. She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; Editor: Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA; Editor-in-Chief: AdVantage magazine; Editor: Marketing Mx magazine; Editor: Progressive Retailing magazine; Editor: BusinessBrief magazine; Editor: FMOG Files newsletter. Web: www.sourceagency.co.za.

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