

# THE EARTH ARMISTICE



*Let Us Beat Swords Into Plowshares* statue at the United Nations Headquarters, New York City. |Photo courtesy of [Rodsan18](#)

## **ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AS A FUNDAMENTAL THREAT TO LIFE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY ON THE EARTH.**

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*The following article outlines a call for the UN Security Council (UNSC), consistent with Articles 25 and 26 of the UN Charter, to pass a resolution that is legally binding on all member-states to devote from 10-20 percent of their annual or projected defense budgets to the critical security issue of restraining and then reversing climate change. A more complete explanation of the Earth Armistice proposal, with supporting sources and footnotes, can be found [here](#) and in the [MAHB's library](#).*

## THE IMMEDIATE IMPERATIVE: TIME FOR DECISION AND DECISIVE ACTION

In order to address and reverse climate change, the Earth Armistice requires that all states, following the appropriate UN Security Council Resolution (UNSC),<sup>1</sup> to set aside from 10% to 20% of their current and projected defense budgets yearly, and invest these funds domestically as well as internationally to: cut carbon consumption to near zero; develop and deploy green technologies to rapidly transition from carbon based energy or technology to sustainable energy and technologies; use negative emissions to develop and deploy carbon sequestration (Earth-based on land or in oceans) or geo-engineering (aerosol or in the atmosphere) technologies,<sup>2</sup> as well as engage and support massive conservation and --in honor of Wangari Maathai of Kenya-- reforestation efforts on every inhabited continent in the world.<sup>3</sup>

Such remedial action is also essential to insure **sustainable development** for all developing states and that the goals of the **2030 Agenda Action Plan** are met as well;<sup>4</sup> in fact, the funds set aside will help create hundreds of thousands of jobs around the world in developing and deploying green technologies, helping economies transition to carbon free economies, developing and deploying large scale negative emissions technologies and reforesting the six inhabited continents of the world. In short, these funds must be shared with developing states as well if international efforts to overcome climate change are to finally succeed.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), “total world military expenditure rose to \$1739 billion in 2017, a marginal increase of 1.1 per cent in real terms from 2016.”<sup>5</sup> In view of this massive expenditure for war, or preparations for war, states can redirect a certain percentage—to be negotiated in the UNSC—to be devoted to addressing effectively and ultimately reversing climate change as an integral new mission of UN member states’ defense establishments; this should be considered an integral aspect of national defense as well as the “common security” of each state and all peoples.<sup>6</sup> Make no mistake about it—climate change if continued unabated and unchecked, is a possible extinction event for all or most of humanity.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Charter of the United Nations, Chapter V, Article 25 and Article 26.

<sup>2</sup> The distinction between carbon sequestration and geo engineering technologies is made in: Boudreau T. (2017). The Earth's Atmosphere As A Global Trust: Establishing Proportionate State Responsibility To Maintain, Restore And Sustain The Global Atmosphere. *Environmental and Earth Law Journal (EELJ)*, 7(1), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Maathai, W. (2010). *Replenishing the earth: Spiritual values for healing ourselves and the world*. Image.

<sup>4</sup> See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2018/global-military-spending-remains-high-17-trillion>

<sup>6</sup> The concept of “Common security” was pioneered by Willy Brandt and the Brundtland Report in the 1980s; see: Keeble, B. R. (1988). The Brundtland report: ‘Our common future’. *Medicine and War*, 4(1), 17-25.

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, Gala Vince, A Looming Mass Extinction Caused By Humans, BBC (Nov. 1,

2012), <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20121101-a-looming-mass-extinction>; S.A. Rogers, *Human Beings Could Go Extinct Within 100 Years, Says Renowned Scientist*, MMN (Jun. 25, 2010, 12:53PM), <http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/climateweather/>

So, with climate change accelerating and increasingly devastating larger areas of the Earth, leading to greater wildfires, droughts, flooding, extreme weather events as well as species extinction events,<sup>8</sup> the time is ripe for the UNSC to pass the appropriate resolution calling for an “Earth Armistice” and devote from 10 to 20 percent of each member states’ defense budget to addressing effectively climate change. If the larger percentage of 20% becomes mandatory, due to UNSC action, then this will release almost 350 billion dollars immediately to address and reverse climate change. If this amount proves insufficient to the task of stopping and reversing climate change, then the UNSG can adjust the percentage to ensure that effective action is finally achieved.

In particular, many of the permanent powers on the UN Security Council are planning nuclear weapons modernization programs in the next ten years and committing over a trillion dollars to these efforts.<sup>9</sup> As part of the Earth Armistice, all development, testing or deployment of new or “modernized” nuclear weapons, any related technical components as well as their delivery systems should cease immediately for the duration of the Armistice. The Earth certainly doesn’t need one more nuclear weapon in the world.<sup>10</sup>

The immediate goal of the Earth Atmosphere—still humanly possible—would be to reduce CO2 gases in the global atmosphere to below 400 ppm though the steps outlined above including negative emissions.<sup>11</sup> The ultimate goal must be to reduce CO2 to 350 ppm, the figure that leading atmospheric scientists state is the necessary level in order for life to survive and flourish, promising sustainable development and common climate security for all in the future.<sup>12</sup>

### **FIRST STEPS: INITIATING THE EARTH ARMISTICE**

The time for simply talking about climate change has passed; so, the Earth Armistice can be initiated by either the member-states of the UN General Assembly passing a resolution calling

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stories/humans-could-go-extinct-within-100-years-says-renowned-scientist;

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. Also see: Boudreau, supra, note 2

<sup>9</sup> Once again, SIPRI is an excellent source on this issue: see: <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2017/global-nuclear-weapons-modernization-remains-priority> Also See: <https://www.newsweek.com/us-russia-race-build-nuclear-weapons-they-actually-against-one-another-777137>. Or see: Arms Control Associations projections in the US at: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/USNuclearModernization>. Also see: Kristensen, H. M., & Norris, R. S. (2017). Russian nuclear forces, 2017. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 73(2), 115-126. Finally see: Goldstein, A. (2000). *Deterrence and security in the 21st century: China, Britain, France, and the enduring legacy of the nuclear revolution*. LIT Verlag Münster.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> See supra, note 2, “the Earth’s Atmosphere,” which discusses a “Restoration” of the Earth Atmosphere using a variety of mitigation methods including the large scale testing and deployment of negative emissions technologies.

<sup>12</sup> Hansen, J., Sato, M., Kharecha, P., Beerling, D., Berner, R., Masson-Delmotte, V., ... & Zachos, J. C. (2008). Target atmospheric CO2: Where should humanity aim?. *arXiv preprint arXiv:0804.1126*.

on the UN Security Council<sup>13</sup> to consider and pass such a legally binding resolution, or for the NON-permanent members of the UN Security Council to bring up the issue immediately for negotiations and a vote within Council proceedings. Since climate change, if continued, will undoubtedly cause vast human migrations and resulting ethnic or actual inter-state wars, the issue is certainly related to the maintenance of international peace and security.<sup>14</sup> So, the issue of an Earth's Armistice is critical to prevent future conflicts and even wars and thus maintain international peace and security, an area that the UN General Assembly(UNGA) is empowered by the UN Charter to address as well.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the Earth Armistice can be originated in either the UNGA or the UN Security Council (UNSC), but it must be ultimately passed by the UNSG to become legally binding on all states.

Yet, given current politics, the first few attempts to pass such a resolution may fail; but each attempt will educate the global public and policy elites that a very powerful way to address climate change now exists, and thus insure its passage. In short, the UN Security Council can decisively help to address climate change in in one vote. So, in view of the great and growing danger caused by climate change, there is no time to lose; the UN Security Council must pass an Earth Armistice to begin the massive, sustained and global efforts to roll back climate change as a critical way to maintain as well as preserve peace, security and life itself on this planet.

## IN SUMMARY

The **Earth Armistice** proposes that the UN Security Council (UNSC) pass a resolution that, in accordance with UN Charter Articles 25 and 26, will be legally binding on all member-states to devote from 10-20 percent of their annual or projected defense budgets to the critical security issue of restraining and then reversing climate change; this can be done *in one vote* and will immediately, create a fund of an estimated 350 billion dollars using the funds both domestically and internationally to first restore the Earth's atmosphere below 400 PPM as an immediate goal; the ultimate goal is to reduce CO2 in the atmosphere to 350 ppm, a level that scientists have identified as necessary to insure survival for present and future generations of human beings as well as the ecosystems that support and sustain all of life on the planet Earth. As such, the UNSG must pass such an **Earth Armistice** resolution annually, adjusting the amount of funds needed, until the threat of catastrophic climate change as a basic threat to the "maintenance of international peace and security" is overcome by successful and now fully empowered international, domestic and individual initiatives as well as enduring, effective action.

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<sup>13</sup> UN Charter, Chapter IV, Art. 11..

<sup>14</sup> This conclusion was raised by the groundbreaking work of Thomas Homer Dixon, then at the University of Toronto and his colleagues, back in the early 1990s. See: Homer-Dixon, T. F. (1994). Environmental scarcities and violent conflict: evidence from cases. *International security*, 19(1), 5-40.and more recently: Homer-Dixon, T. F. (2010). *Environment, scarcity, and violence*. Princeton University Press.

<sup>15</sup> See supra, note.7

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