



Forum: Security Council

Issue: The question of the impact of climate change on international peace and security

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Introduction

Climate change is a serious issue, not only because flora and fauna may get extinct by a severe change in the climate, but there has been prove of a shift in human behaviour in correlation to climate change. That shift of behaviour may result into a threat on international peace and security, since events like a war can occur.

The international climate regime is built upon a clear understanding of the threats posed by, and the causes of climate change. Since more than a century and a half, industrialization and the clear-felling of forests and certain farming methods, led to increased quantities of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere.

The recent years provided more clarity about human-generated climate change than ever before. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) did a lot of scientific research on climate change. The IPCC released its Fifth Assessment Report: climate change is real and human activities have a major part in this. Not only human activities have a part in the recent climate change, also the emissions from animals and plants increase the carbon dioxide (CO₂) level in the atmosphere.

Definition of Key Terms

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is an international environmental treaty adopted on 21 March 1994. The UNFCCC objective is to “stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system”. The framework sets non-binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual countries and contains no enforcement mechanisms. Instead, the framework outlines how specific international treaties may be negotiated to specify further action towards the objective of the UNFCCC. On 12 June 1992, 154 nations signed the UNFCCC. ¹

Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol is an international treaty which extends the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC). The Kyoto Protocol implemented the

¹ “United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Jan. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Framework_Convention_on_Climate_Change.



objective of the UNFCCC. The Protocol is based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities: it puts the obligation to reduce current emissions on developed countries on the basis that they are historically responsible for the current levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.²

Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement, Paris climate accord or Paris climate agreement is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) dealing with greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance starting in the year 2020. The language of the agreement was negotiated by representatives of 196 parties at the 21st Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC in Paris and adopted by consensus on 12 December 2015. In the Paris Agreement, each country determines, plans and regularly reports its own contribution it should make in order to mitigate global warming. There is no mechanism to force a country to set a specific target by a specific date, but each target should go beyond previous set targets.

In June 2017, United States President Donald Trump announced his intention to withdraw the United States from the agreement, causing widespread condemnation both internationally and domestically. Under the agreement, the earliest effective date of withdrawal for the U.S. is November 2020, shortly before the end of President Trump's first term.

In July 2017, France's environment minister Nicolas Hulot announced France's five-year plan to ban all petrol and diesel vehicles by 2040 as part of the Paris Agreement. Hulot has stated that France would no longer use coal to produce electricity after 2022 and that up to €4 billion will be invested in boosting energy efficiency.^{3,4,5}

Global Warming

Global warming, also referred to as climate change, is the observed century-scale rise in the average temperature of the Earth's climate system and its related effects. Multiple lines of scientific evidence show that the climate system is warming. In 2013, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report concludes that "It is *extremely likely*

² "Kyoto Protocol." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Jan. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyoto_Protocol.

³ "Paris Agreement." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Jan. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Agreement.

⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. "Status of ratification." *The Paris Agreement - main page*, 12 Oct. 2017, unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php.

⁵ "UNFCCC eHandbook." *UNFCCC eHandbook - Startpage*, bigpicture.unfccc.int/#content-the-paris-agreemen.

that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.”⁶

World Climate Conference

The World Climate Conferences are a series of international meetings, organized by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), about global climate issues principally global warming in addition to climate research and forecasting.⁷

Copenhagen Accord

The Copenhagen Accord is a document that delegates at the 15th session of the Conference of Parties (COP 15) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed to “take note of” at the final plenary on 18 December 2009. The Accord, drafted by, on the one hand, the United States of America and on the other, in a united position the BASIC countries (China, India, South Africa and Brazil), is not legally binding and does not commit countries to agree to a binding successor to the Kyoto Protocol, whose round ended in 2012. The Accord underlines that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and emphasises a “strong political will to urgently combat climate change in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.”⁸

General Overview

UN discourse shows that the security implications of climate change are interdependent of one another. Even though a focus on climate change as a factor of political insecurity might also neglect other causes such responsibility of public actors, like the Sudanese government in the conflict in Darfur, some UN publications insist on the complexity and interdependence of the causal relations. An important publication is one by the UNEP (The United

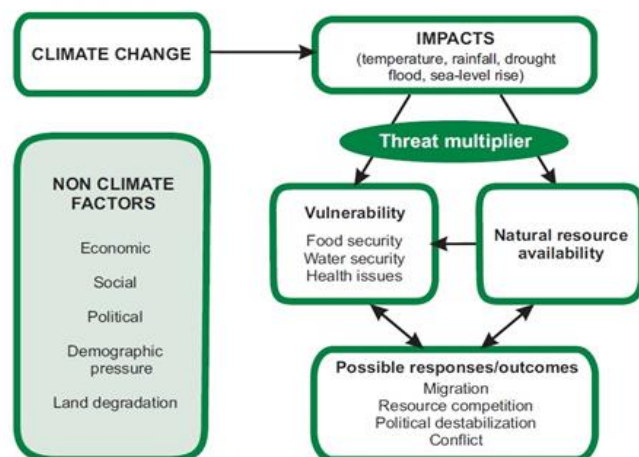


Image 1: UNEP visualization of threats in correlation to climate change

⁶ “Global warming.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Jan. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_warming.

⁷ “World Climate Conference.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 3 Jan. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Climate_Conference.

⁸ “Copenhagen Accord.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 3 Jan. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copenhagen_Accord.



Nations Programme for the Environment), which gives a great visual understanding on the topic of the correlation between climate change and international security. The image shows a possible response on a certain form of climate change and separates non-climate factors from climate factors.

One of the biggest examples on this matter is the Arctic. Due to global warming, ice melts and sea levels rise. This could have a huge impact on international security, since all countries are involved directly. This story is well known, but nevertheless there are an incredible amount of examples of the impact of climate change on international security. The first on record is the situation of Darfur, a war started by climate change. Since 2003, the Darfur region of western Sudan has been the site of a terrible violence, death and displacement, what some states have labelled genocide. What some may not know, however, is that the war in Darfur, Sudan is frequently cited as a classic example of a climate conflict. Climate variability in the Sahel, which culminated with devastating droughts in the 1970s and 80s, has played an important role in creating different groups in and around the Sahel society. With lowering rainfall percentage and the Sahara advancing by well over a mile every year, tensions between farmers and herders over disappearing pasture and evaporating water holes threaten to reignite the half-century war between north and south Sudan, held at bay by a precarious 2005 peace accord. The southern Nuba tribe, for example, have warned they could "restart the war" because Arab nomads - pushed southwards into their territory by drought - are cutting down trees to feed their camels. This conflict is still going on today and the UNEP is afraid it could only get worse. The predictions are that over 70% of the crops that are harvested today, are not able to grow in the future.

This shows proof of the visualisation (see image 1) created by the UNEP. Drought in this case, is vulnerable to food security and creates conflict. In the question of this topic it is viable to recognise and analyse the problem at first and then try to find a fitting solution that suits the individual conflict and contributes to finding a solution for the problem on an international base.

Major Parties Involved

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a scientific and intergovernmental body under the auspices of the United Nations, set up at the request of member governments, dedicated to the task of providing the world with an objective, scientific view of climate change and its political and economic impacts. The IPCC produces reports that support the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The IPCC does not carry out its own original research, nor does it do the work of monitoring climate or

related phenomena itself. It bases its assessment on the published literature, which includes peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed sources.⁹

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

The United Nations Environment Programme is an agency of the United Nations and coordinates its environmental activities, assisting developing countries in implementing environmentally sound policies and practices¹⁰. It has overall responsibility for environmental problems among United Nations agencies but international talks on specialized issues, such as addressing climate change or combating desertification, are overseen by other UN organizations.

The Arctic

The Arctic is a polar region located at the northernmost part of Earth. The Arctic consists of the Arctic Ocean, adjacent seas, and parts of Alaska (United States), Northern Canada (Canada), Finland, Greenland (Denmark), Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. Land within the Arctic region had seasonally varying snow and ice cover, with predominantly treeless permafrost-containing tundra. Arctic seas contain seasonal sea ice in many places.¹¹



Image 2: Map of the Arctic Region

The Arctic's climate is characterized by cold winters and cool summers. High winds often stir up snow, creating the illusion of continuous snowfall. Average winter temperatures can be as low as -40°C , and the coldest recorded temperature is approximately -68°C .¹²

⁹ "Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Jan. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intergovernmental_Panel_on_Climate_Change.

¹⁰ "United Nations Environment Programme." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Jan. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Environment_Programme.

¹¹ "Arctic." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Jan. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arctic.

¹² "Arctic." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Jan. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arctic.

Darfur

Darfur is a region in western Sudan. Darfur was an independent sultanate for several hundreds years, incorporated into Sudan by Anglo-Egyptian forces in 1916. Because of the war in Darfur between Sudanese government forces and the indigenous population, the region has been in a state of humanitarian emergency since 2003.¹³

The region is now divided into five federal states: Central Darfur, East Darfur, North Darfur, South Darfur and West Darfur. The Darfur Peace Agreement of 2006 established a Transitional Darfur Regional Authority as an interim authority for the region. The agreement stated that a referendum should be held no later than 2011 to decide about the status of Darfur. The regional authority was dissolved in July 2016 following a referendum, on the status of the Darfur region within Sudan.^{14,15}



Image 3: Map of Darfur

Sahel

The Sahel part of Africa includes (from west to east) parts of northern Senegal, southern Mauritania, central Mali, northern Burkina Faso, the extreme south of Algeria, Niger, the extreme north of Nigeria, central Chad, central and southern Sudan, the extreme north of South Sudan, Eritrea, Cameroon, Central African Republic and extreme north of Ethiopia.¹⁶



Image 4: Map of The Sahel

The Sahel has a tropical, hot steppe climate. The climate is typically hot, sunny, dry and somewhat windy all year long. The Sahel's climate is similar to, but less extreme than, the climate of the Sahara desert located just to the north.¹⁷

¹³ "Darfur." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 6 Jan. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darfur.

¹⁴ "TEXT- Darfur Peace Agreement: A just peace or peace at all costs?" *TEXT- Darfur Peace Agreement: A just peace or peace at all costs? - Sudan Tribune: Plural news and views on Sudan*, www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article15343.

¹⁵ Team, Enough. "Sudan Peace Watch-December 21, 2010." *The Enough Project*, 21 Dec. 2010, enoughproject.org/reports/sudan-peace-watch-december-21-2010.

¹⁶ "OCHA." *Express concern at acts, threats or situations of violence against civilians, and condemn violations of applicable international humanitarian law and human rights law, and human rights abuses | OCHA*, www.unocha.org/aide-memoire/express-concern-acts-threats-or-situations-violence-against-civilians-and-condemn.

¹⁷ "Sahel." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 1 Jan. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahel#cite_note-4.



China

Coastal zones, like the East coasts of China, are the home of about one fifth of the world's population, a number set to rise in the years ahead. Mega-cities, with their supporting infrastructure, such as port facilities and oil refineries, are often located by the sea or in river deltas. Sea-level rise and the increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters pose a serious threat to these regions and their economic prospects. The East coasts of China would be particularly affected. An increase in disasters and humanitarian crises will lead to immense pressure on the resources of donor countries, including capacities for emergency relief operations.

France

European leaders have urged more global action to combat global warming after US President Donald Trump pulled out of the 2015 Paris agreement, with both France and Germany promising more funding to make up the shortfall. France's President Emmanuel Macron said France aimed to close down all coal-fired power plants by 2021 as part of action to limit greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁸

Furthermore, Emmanuel Macron said on the 19th of September of 2017: *"We all know that the degradation of the environment is already causing hundreds of thousands of deaths – millions according to some calculations – due to global warming and air pollution. [...] Unless it's slowed down, this change will cause the disappearance of entire territories. It will accentuate water wars, famines, the exhaustion of natural resources, exoduses and therefore all the geopolitical turmoil issues of which we're perfectly aware and of which, much too often, we deal only with the ultimate consequences without tackling the root causes. These disasters will be worse tomorrow if we do nothing – even though many opportunities and developments are possible – and if we don't decide to act now."*¹⁹

¹⁸ Batchelor, Tom. "Paris agreement: Macron says climate deal will not be renegotiated despite Trump's demands." *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 19 Sept. 2017, www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/paris-agreement-trump-macron-climate-deal-renegotiated-france-says-no-a7956036.html.

¹⁹ "Climate and security." *France ONU*, onu.delegfrance.org/Climate-and-security.



Timeline of Events

- 1979 The first World Climate Conference takes place.
- 1988 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is set up. To learn more about the science of climate change.
- 1990 The IPCC and the second World Climate Conference call for a global treaty on climate change. The United Nations General Assembly negotiations on a framework convention begin.
- 1992 At the Earth Summit in Rio, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is opened for signature along with its sister Rio Conventions, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.
- 1994 The UNFCCC enters into force.
- 1995 The First Conference of the Parties, COP 1(meeting one) (see 1990) takes place in Berlin.
- 1997 The Kyoto Protocol is formally adopted in December at COP3. The Protocol legally binds developed countries to emission reduction targets.
- 2007 The IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report is released. Climate science entered into popular consciousness. At COP13, Parties agreed on the Bali Road Map, which charted the way towards a post-2012 outcome in two work streams: the AWG-KP, and another under the Convention, known as the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action Under the Convention.
- 2009 Copenhagen Accord drafted at COP15 in Copenhagen. Countries later submitted emissions reductions pledges or mitigation action pledges, all non-binding.
- 2010 Cancun Agreements drafted and largely accepted by the COP, at COP16. Through the Agreements, countries made their emission reduction pledges official, in what was the largest collective effort the world has ever seen to reduce emissions in a mutually accountable way.
- 2011 The Durban Platform for Enhanced Action drafted and accepted by the COP, at COP17. In Durban, governments



clearly recognized the need to draw up the blueprint for a fresh universal, legal agreement to deal with climate change beyond 2020, where all will play their part to the best of their ability and all will be able to reap the benefits of success together.

2012

The Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol is adopted by the CMP. The amendment includes: new commitments for Annex I Parties to the Kyoto Protocol who agreed to take on commitments in a second commitment period from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2020; a revised list of greenhouse gases to be reported on by Parties in the second commitment period; and amendments to several articles of the Kyoto Protocol pertaining to the first commitment period and which needed to be updated for the second commitment period.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

As stated above, there have been a lot of meetings between countries to discuss different problems about the climate change. The IPCC was the first organisation that was fully focused on the science of climate change. They learned a lot about several possible cases in the world.

The UNFCCC entered into force in 1994, 4 years after the IPCC was set up. In this Convention, a lot of scientific information that the IPCC discovered was covered. It was a very revolutionary document, but unfortunately not good enough to solve all the problems in the world between governments related to climate change.

On June 30th, 2015, the UN Security Council (UNSC) held an open Arrria-formula meeting on the role of climate change as a threat multiplier for global security. The aim of the meeting was: “to better identify the inter-connected threats to international peace and security related to Climate Change.” The concept note continues: “Everyday more countries are incorporating climate change considerations into their national security policies and since Climate Change is, and will be, altering geopolitical dynamics, it seems necessary to develop more structured means of addressing this issue from an international perspective.”²⁰

Furthermore, there were a lot of discussions about some agreements, such as the Copenhagen Accord, the Cancun Agreements, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.

²⁰ “UN Security Council Meeting on Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier for Global Security.” *The Center for Climate & Security*, 8 July 2015, climateandsecurity.org/2015/07/08/un-security-council-meeting-on-climate-change-as-a-threat-multiplier-for-global-security/.



You can find more information about the Copenhagen Accord, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement at the Definition of Key Terms.

Possible solutions

When you think about this topic, you could think about a lot of world problems related to climate change. Every problem has of course its own solution. However, there could be some solutions to this topic in general. First of all, it is viable to recognise and analyse the problem at first and then try to find a fitting solution that suits the individual conflict and contributes to finding a solution for the problem on an international base. A solution to a specific matter in, for example, North America, could benefit solving a specific matter in, for example, South America.

Since this topic affects every single person on earth, collaborative research and sharing of knowledge is viable to obtain safety or the creation of any means of protection and prevention of any climate related issues.

Secondly, there should be more scientific research in areas, where it is likely that climate change could cause problems. However, doing scientific research in the whole world is of course not bad at all. With this research, citizens gain more knowledge about the problems in their area, or problems that could evolve there.

Finally, setting up an organization on climate change (in form of a research department or political activism) in every climate region to create awareness. This keeps every citizen in a country actively seized on the matter. Furthermore, these organizations could help the government with coming up with new ideas to solve the issues.

Useful documents

- The Paris Agreement (UNFCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1 - <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a01.pdf>)
- Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf>)
- The Copenhagen Accord (UNFCCC/CP/2009/11/Add.1 - <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/11a01.pdf>)



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