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CLIMATE CHANGE AND PEACE: ‘WHAT IS NOT TO BE DONE’

AUTHORED BY - APOORVA MISHRA

ABSTRACT

Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) talks about ‘Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions’, which is in a way, a precursor to, us achieving other SDG’s. This is so because it is well established that world’s strongest institutions and praiseworthy successes are achieved in the backdrop of a peaceful world. In this paper, I would link SDG 16 with SDG 13, in order to showcase the interconnectedness between both.

Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG 13) ‘to combat climate change and its impacts’, entails not just positive obligations to combat climate change but also negative obligations that are to be adopted to prevent further spiralling of the situation. Preventing conflict and maintaining peace is one such example of negative obligation that Nations need to adopt to avoid worsening the already worse situation. I say this because one of the effects of climate change has been felt on the availability of already limited resources; leading to conflict and unrest not just within the nations themselves but also between nations.

Through this paper, I would like to illustrate how climate change and conflict management overlap in the sphere of SDG 13 and its several manifestations that can be observed worldwide. However, the main focus of this paper, is to analyse whether or not the recent proposal by Niger and Ireland to include climate change under the jurisdiction of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is appropriate in the larger context of world order and development. This ‘securitization of climate’ in the world forum may or may not be the beginning of a crisis unfolding, because of the internal issues that the Security Council in itself faces, and this is what I would like to examine.

Keywords: *Climate change, Conflict, Environment, Sustainable Development Goal, United Nations Security Council*

I. Introduction

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its working report 6¹, has forewarned the world about the impending danger that is approaching the world; and it is upon us, to work upon adaptation and mitigation before the tragedy strikes. However, climate change is not about natural disasters, but more so about the consequences it brings. Armed Conflict, Internal rebellion and National unrest is one such consequence of climate change, that we cannot afford to ignore. It has been clearly established that climate change is leading to increased friction among communities, nations and the world in general because of depleting resources, an aftereffect of climate change².

In order to tackle such obstacles, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 16 when read together, aim to prevent such conflicts arising from climate change. Consequently, the nations are under an obligation to achieve the target by the year 2030. Environment and climate change being a natural phenomenon affects all the countries equally, whether rich or poor, developed or developing; emphasising the need for an international collaboration. And what better organisation to spearhead international efforts than the United Nations itself.

The supporter nations of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), have been pushing forward the agenda of increasing its mandate to include matters of climate change induced conflict, essentially bringing environmental matters within its fold. Whether doing so would actually aid international cooperation or will indeed prove to be an obstacle in the progress of environmental issue needs to be analysed by dwelling into the mandate and working mechanism of the UNSC. Through this paper, I will address two pertinent questions surrounding the issue, the facts and basis about linking conflict with climate change and the appropriateness of the UNSC as a security forum to handle matters concerning climate and environment; putting forth facts and figures to ascertain the claims; and a natural outcome that comes out from such discussions as regards the issues in question.

¹International Panel on Climate Change, *Working Group 6 Report* (2022, April 4) <<https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>>

²International Committee of the Red Cross, *Climate Change and Conflict* (n.d.) <<https://www.icrc.org/en/what-we-do/climate-change-conflict>>

II. Problem Statement

The paper will primarily focus on two issues throughout:

- a) Whether climate change has indeed led to the rise in conflict; and if it has then how is it manifested;
- b) Whether the United Nations Security Council is the appropriate forum to tackle the conflict that arises from environmental irregularities

III. Literature Review

*Mach, et al, (2019)*³ focuses the study on assessing whether climate as a phenomenon can be a risk factor for the armed conflict. The authors try to understand the connection between climate and conflict based on the findings of various experts spread across various disciplines. The study is concluded by estimating that there might be a positive correlation between the changing climate and the increase in the intensity of conflicts. *Nunn and McGuirk*⁴, (2021) focuses their research on the transhumant pastoralists' community from Africa in order to establish any linkage between climate change and armed rebellion. The authors conclude that droughts precipitated by climate change force farmers and pastoralists to compete for scant resources, triggering violent clashes. Further, *Abel, et al, (2019)*⁵ concentrates their discussion on climate refugees, group of people that are displaced from their lands because of the effects of climate change. Lastly, *Missirian and Schlenker, (2017)*⁶ seeks to find out whether or not asylum applications respond to temperature fluctuations. They conclude their study by forecasting that the asylum applications will be on the rise along with the rise in global temperatures.

³Mach, Kraan, Adger, Buhaug, Burke, Fearon, Field, Hendrix, & Uexkull. 'Climate as a risk factor for armed conflict' (2019) *Nature*, Vol. 571, 193-199.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-019-1300-6.epdf?sharing_token=ALdeZhse5Px7IH9WL37WNRgN0jAjWel9jnR3ZoTv0OKs_okPQ2BFA0HB8Pqkg7ox160H3VcTRPXIvHkFoBx8Xg6O7mPy7dUa6mixoTdPxUG0Efr9ltYAZ5iS8T3eHbfRnRG0MFaDuUuiFzEaflB8iv2V2wZotTMGKv6cU3eHr-NeHDP6zwZfeOOwExQRvpclANcuUNAJZgegF18fK0EhuPLDPn2p82C6gkfe8s0ds%3D&tracking_referrer=www.washingtonpost.com>

⁴Nathan, N., & Eoin M., 'How Climate shocks trigger inter- group conflicts: Evidence from Africa's transhumance pastoralists' (2021, April 30) *VoxDev*.

<<https://voxdev.org/topic/energy-environment/how-climate-shocks-trigger-inter-group-conflicts-evidence-africa-s-seasonal-migrants>>

⁵Guy, J., Michael, B., Jesus, C., & Raya, M., 'Climate, Conflict and forced migration' (2019, January) *Global Environmental Change*, Vol. 54, 239-249.

<<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959378018301596?via%3Dihub>>

⁶Aouch M., & Wolfram, S., 'Asylum applications respond to temperature fluctuations. *Science*' (2017, December 22)

<<https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aao0432>>

On the other hand, the research topic of UNSC taking up matters of climate induced conflicts is relatively recent and hence, lacks any bulky research. Majority literature consists of United Nations official documents, press releases and reports. The *Security Council Report, (2021)*⁷ and the *Peacebuilding Support Office Report, (2020)*⁸ gives an insight into the debate that took place among the members of UNSC regarding ‘securitisation of climate’. *Conway, (2018)*⁹ discusses the challenges and opportunities that the World’s nations might encounter if the UNSC is allowed to take up environmental security matters. Finally, *Maertens, (2021)*¹⁰ explains the concept of climate security followed by a discussion on the matter by drawing insights from the UNSC debates.

IV. Summary Of Research Methodology

For this research, I have primarily relied upon secondary sources of data to support my arguments; however, usage of primary sources has also been done to substantiate my claims wherever required. Through primary research; largely United Nations charter, official releases and communiqués; I have analysed my position as to whether or not environmental security matters can be made a mandate of the UNSC. The United Nations charter and press releases have provided me with authentic information about the mandate of UNSC, process regarding selection of non- permanent members and its voting procedure, which forms an important basis on which this paper rests its premises.

In the secondary method of research references to books, online sources, newspaper articles and previous research papers have been made, mainly dealing with the first part of the paper i.e., whether there is a connection between climate change and armed conflict, and if so, its manifestations.

⁷UN Security Council, *The UN Security Council and Climate Change* (2021, June 21) <<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/research-reports/the-un-security-council-and-climate-change.php>>

⁸United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, *Climate Change recognized as threat multiplier; UN Security Council debates its impact on peace* (n.d.)

<<https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/news/climate-change-recognized-%E2%80%99threat-multiplier%E2%80%99-un-security-council-debates-its-impact-peace>>

⁹Darragh, C., ‘The United Nations Security Council: Challenged and Opportunities’ (2010, January) *Climate Law*, 1(3), 375-405.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228747778_The_United_Nations_Security_Council_and_climate_change_Challenges_and_opportunities>

¹⁰Lucile, M., ‘Climatizing the UN Security Council’ (2021, February 4) *International Politics*, 58, 640-660. <<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41311-021-00281-9>>

V. Discussions

A. *Whether climate change has indeed led to the rise in conflict; and if it has then how is it manifested*

Natural resources consisting of food, water, energy and minerals form the basic necessity of an individual as well as the nation collectively. They not only sustain the lives of people but also, drive the economy of a nation¹¹. Therefore, it is natural that they are in high demand but limited in supply. In fact, they are getting scarcer by the day¹². Part of the blame can be attributed to the changing climate, example being land, which is already under growing human pressure with climate change adding to these pressures.¹³

The consequences of such competition entails inter community fighting, armed conflicts and rebellions thereby, impacting the security of people. Professor Pavel Kabat, Chief Scientist, WMO, states, “Climate change has a multitude of security impacts - rolling back the gains in nutrition and access to food; heightening the risk of wildfires and exacerbating air quality challenges; increasing the potential for water conflict; leading to more internal displacement and migration, increasingly regarded as a national security threat.”¹⁴

The *Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-Gain) Index* highlights that the countries dealing with conflict such as Yemen, Congo, Afghanistan, etc. are the most vulnerable to impacts of climate change.¹⁵ Further, every 1-degree Celsius increase in temperature increases conflict between individuals by 2.4% and conflict between groups by 11.3%.¹⁶

Manifestations of Climate Induced Conflicts

Climate induced security problems can manifest in multiple modes. For instance, in Rwanda, demographic pressures on the vital natural resources and the need of communities to secure it for themselves ultimately, resulted in the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. In the

¹¹World Economic Forum, *The Future Availability of Natural Resources A new paradigm for Global Resource Availability* (2014).

<https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_FutureAvailabilityNaturalResources_Report_2014.pdf>

¹²Camila, R., ‘The 6 natural resources most drained by our 7 billion people’ (2011, October 31) *The Guardian*. <<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/blog/2011/oct/31/six-natural-resources-population>>

¹³International Panel on Climate Change, *Land is a critical resource* (n.d.).

<https://www.ipcc.ch/2019/08/08/land-is-a-critical-resource_srccl/>

¹⁴UN Peacebuilding Commission, *Climate change recognized as threat multiplier* (n.d.)

<<https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/news/climate-change-recognized-%E2%80%98threat-multiplier%E2%80%99-un-security-council-debates-its-impact-peace>>

¹⁵International Committee of the Red Cross, *seven things you need to know about climate change and conflict* (2020, July 9)

<<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/climate-change-and-conflict>>

¹⁶Marshall, B., Solomon, M., & Edward, M., ‘Climate and Conflict’ (2015, May 13) *The Annual Review of Economics*, 7, 577-617

<<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-economics-080614-115430>>

Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, China, shrinking land for grazing has resulted in the increasing friction between the herders and farmers for control over the pasture land.¹⁷

Such security challenges usually start off as a mere friction, but with the increased competition, it ultimately blows up, leading to large scale and violent, conflicts and confrontations among communities. This then no longer remains an environmental challenge, but in fact, a threat to the communities themselves and to the security and peace of the nation. Examples of such occurrences are plenty which includes the *Darfur conflict (2003)*¹⁸, unrest between communities in the Turkana region of *northern Kenya (2022)*¹⁹, and local-level conflict over land and irrigation water in *Afghanistan (2012)*²⁰.

This security challenge has proved to be particularly volatile in the continent of Africa, with the majority of communities involved in intense conflict over the possession of resources. In the *Lake Chad Basin Area*, around [thirty million people](#) in Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon are competing over the dramatically shrinking water source, which from 1960, has lost 90% of its surface [water](#). This has resulted in increasing abductions, killings and rights violations and to the growth of [terrorist organisations](#), causing ten million people to need humanitarian assistance²¹. Similarly, the instance of kidnappings of three hundred and forty four boys in Nigeria, due to kidnapper's objections over how their cattle are being killed and how various vigilante units [disturb them, is an indirect effect that can be attributed to climate change.](#)

a) *Climate Refugees*: The U.S. Government has officially recognized a link between climate change and migration emphasising its significant implications for international security, instability, conflict, and geopolitics.²² The [Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#), also clearly accepts the link between large-scale

¹⁷Bingham, K., 'Environmental Scarcity and the Outbreak of Conflict' (2001, January 1) PRB.

<<https://www.prb.org/resources/environmental-scarcity-and-the-outbreak-of-conflict/>>

¹⁸Ahmad, S., 'The World's Worst Humanitarian Crisis: Understanding the Darfur Conflict.' (2009, February) Origins.

<https://origins.osu.edu/article/worlds-worst-humanitarian-crisis-understanding-darfur-conflict?language_content_entity=en>

¹⁹Kang, C., 'Conflict over resources in Kenya hits deadly highs with firearms in play' (2022, May 19) Mongabay. <<https://news.mongabay.com/2022/05/conflict-over-resources-in-kenya-hits-deadly-highs-with-firearms-in-play/>>

²⁰'Natural Resources and Conflict in Afghanistan: Conclusion from seven cases in ten provinces' (2012, October 12) The Green Political Foundation.

<<https://www.boell.de/en/2012/10/12/natural-resources-and-conflict-afghanistan-conclusions-seven-cases-ten-provinces>>

²¹Jake, H., 'How is climate change driving conflict in Africa?' (2021, May 11) Reliefweb.

<<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/how-climate-change-driving-conflict-africa>>

²²The White House, *Report on the impact of climate change on migration* (2021, October)

<<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Report-on-the-Impact-of-Climate-Change-on-Migration.pdf>>

movements of people and the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation which includes natural disasters, desertification, land degradation, drought and rising sea.²³ The UNHCR [data report](#)²⁴ shows that the number of people displaced by climate change-related disasters since 2010 has risen to twenty one point five million. Also, one point two billion people more are expected to migrate due to security issues arising from climate change²⁵. Such people termed as ‘climate refugees’²⁶ are barred from qualifying as refugees, thereby at increased risks of survival.²⁷ The hurricanes in *Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador (2020)* can be cited as an apt example wherein large-scale migration of people happened into Mexico and the U.S.

- b) *Increased violence against women and girls*: Another major impact of climate induced security problems is that it affects one gender disproportionately. The *2019 Report on Women, Peace and Security*²⁸, stressed that increasing number of climate security related complex emergencies disproportionately affected women and girls. It is estimated that 80 per cent of people displaced by climate change are women, according to UN Environment. Though women, men, and LGBTIs are subjected to sexual and gender-based violence, majority of the victim remained women and girls²⁹. Not only do women face increased violence during such times, additionally they themselves are imprisoned, upon reporting such incidents.³⁰
- c) *Decreased levels of GDP, Economic output and food security*: Yet another effect of climate induced conflict is on the GDP, economy and the food security of the country. Developing nations are particularly vulnerable with 95% of all conflict displacements

²³United Nations, *UN Resolution A/RES/73/195* (2019, January 11). <<https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FRES%2F73%2F195&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>>

²⁴UNHCR, *UNHCR Data* (n.d.) <<https://www.unhcr.org/data.html>>

²⁵Institute for Economics and Peace, *The Ecosystem Threat Register* (2018, September). <<https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Ecological-Threat-Register-Press-Release-27.08-FINAL.pdf>>

²⁶[Essam El-Hinnawi](#) defined climate – or environmental – refugees as people who have been “forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporarily or permanently, because of marked environmental disruption.”

²⁷Tetsuji, I., ‘Climate Refugees- the world’s forgotten victims’ (2021, June 21) *Race to Zero*. <<https://racetozero.unfccc.int/climate-refugees-the-worlds-forgotten-victims/>>

²⁸Bharat, D., & Moumita, M., ‘Role of climate change in exacerbating sexual and gender-based violence against women: a new challenge for International Law’ (2021) *Environmental Policy and Law*, 51, 137-157. <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/report/role-of-climate-change-in-exacerbating-sexual-and-gender-based-violence-against-women-a-new-challenge-for-international-law/epl_2021_51-3_epl-51-3-epl210055_epl-51-epl210055.pdf>

²⁹UNHCR, *Sexual and Gender- Based Violence* (2021, April 28). <<http://www.unhcr.org/sexual-and-gender-based-violence.html> (accessed on 28 April 2021)>

³⁰OHCHR, *Climate Change exacerbates violence against women and girls* (2022, July 12). <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2022/07/climate-change-exacerbates-violence-against-women-and-girls>>

occurring in such nations.³¹ **Rising temperatures fuel environmental degradation, food and water insecurity, economic disruption, conflict, and terrorism**³². Climate related disasters constituting 90% of all disasters are costing the world economy **five hundred twenty billion USD each year**, with twenty six million people falling below the poverty line. In Syria, desertification of formerly fertile farming land led to loss of income for [eight lakh people](#) and death of 85% of the country's livestock; remaining being targeted by the Islamic State.

B. Whether the United Nations Security Council is the appropriate forum to tackle the conflict that arises from environmental irregularities

The first ever meeting of the Security Council examining the linkages between climate change and security happened in April 2007. Even since then, it has been a topic of continuous debate and deliberations during the years 2011, 2017 and 2018.³³ The UNSC being the primary organ responsible for maintaining peace and security in the world; the objective has been to include within its ambit security matters related to climate and environment as well.

Article 24 of the UN Charter,³⁴ lists the primary responsibility of the UNSC as, 'maintenance of international peace and security.' Further, Article 26 of the Charter allows the UNSC to regulate armaments in order to maintain peace and security internationally. Therefore, simply viewed in the light of its tasks and responsibilities, it is entirely possible for the UNSC to deal with even those security matters that arise on account of climate change, as they are as much a threat to international peace and security as something else. However, I would argue that it would not be in the best interest to do so because of the reasons as discussed below:

a) *Failure to avoid conflicts in the past*

It has been widely reported that the credibility of the UN sanctions regime has been at an all-time low in the recent past because of its failure to deal with important security measures having worldwide repercussion such as the *Taliban takeover of the Afghanistan, the Russia-*

³¹UNHCR, [Global Trends in Forced Displacement 2020](https://www.unhcr.org/60b638e37/unhcr-global-trends2020) (2020)
<<https://www.unhcr.org/60b638e37/unhcr-global-trends2020>>

³²United Nations, *The Climate Crisis- A race we can win* (n.d.)
<<https://www.un.org/en/un75/climate-crisis-race-we-can-win>>

³³Supra at 9

³⁴United Nations, *United Nations Charter, Chapter V: The Security Council* (n.d.)
<<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-5>>

*Ukraine conflict, etc*³⁵. There is valid reason for that as well; the world is facing the highest number of violent conflicts since 1945.

Failure to uphold human rights in Afghanistan to brutal murders and executions in Myanmar, the world is living in a state of unpredictable insecurity.³⁶ These are not instances of recent or even isolated failures because even in the past during the *Syrian conflict*,³⁷ and the *Rohingyan genocide*³⁸, the UNSC failed to take authoritative measures. Even during the COVID-19, the UNSC failed to agree upon a united resolution calling for a global ceasefire.³⁹ Palestine and Kashmir have continued to be the two of the longest-running failures of the UNSC.

b) Lack of Specialisation

The UN Security Council, consists of five permanent member countries and ten non-permanent elected countries which are represented by their respective diplomats⁴⁰. UNSC regularly responds to routine, short term, military confrontations and takes decisions on diplomatic and peacekeeping operations. However, with the absence of any expert body to guide its path, it is not designed to address structural and long-term challenges such as the global nuclear and post-nuclear arms race, conflict between superpowers, or pandemics, and environmental related conflicts in this case.

c) Unfair usage of veto power by the P-5

Article 27 of the UN Charter, provides for the provision of veto as”including the concurring votes of the permanent members”. This is an all-encompassing power that has been provided to just five countries in the whole wide world, without any other recourse to other countries in any manner whatsoever. Environment and its associated security challenges risk needs a collective concern in order to be tackled properly; in such a scenario the availability of veto power to countries can prove to be a lethal weapon in the hands of a selected few.

³⁵‘Credibility of UN Sanctions at all-time low’ *The Hindu* (2022, August 12), D12.

³⁶United Nations, *Exclusion, Inequality and Conflict* (2021, November 9).

<<https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1z/k1zbf2rkol>>

³⁷Sundeep, W., ‘75 years on, it’s time to rethink the UN Security Council’ *The Times of India*. (2020, October 24)

<<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/75-years-on-its-time-to-rethink-the-un-security-council/>>

³⁸Hannah P., ‘UN Security Council overwhelmed by suffering at Rohingya camps’ (2018, April 29) *The Guardian*.

<<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/29/un-security-council-overwhelmed-by-suffering-at-rohingya-camps>>

³⁹‘UN Security Council fails to support Global ceasefire, shows no response to COVID-19’ (2020, May 19) *Reliefweb*.

<<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/un-security-council-fails-support-global-ceasefire-shows-no-response-covid-19>>

⁴⁰United Nations, *Security Councils membership* (n.d.)

<<https://ask.un.org/faq/14382>>

Veto power has been used two hundred eighty-seven times, to date, used by all the five countries at least a couple of times. Although France and Britain have refrained from resorting to veto since the 1980s, however, the other three are still using it to prevent passage of certain resolutions that go against the interests of their allies⁴¹.

Most recently, Russia used its veto to block action in the Council on a resolution that would have deplored its invasion of Ukraine.⁴² The US exercised its first veto in 1970 and has since then used it 83 times.⁴³ Russia and China both have been consistent in somewhat opposing environmental issues to be part of UNSC agenda items⁴⁴. Britain and France colluded with Israel and invaded Sinai and then exercised their veto power during the Suez Conflict in their own interests.⁴⁵

d) Lack of worldwide representation in the UNSC

While agreeing to the fact, that the non- permanent members are chosen in a manner to represent all the geographical regions in the world⁴⁶; it is unfortunate and impractical that there are nil permanent members from Africa. In such case, as questioned by the G-4, "how can the Council reflect African interests at the core level of the decision-making?" For that matter, an Arab seat alternates between the African and Asian blocs by informal agreement while Turkey and Israel have not been a part of UNSC ever.

Further, there is also absence of any nation representing the interests of the Muslim world as a permanent member given the fact that they form a large majority in the world⁴⁷. Additionally, the UNSC has failed to publish a zero draft text that compiles the positions attributed to the delegations participating in the discussions.

⁴¹Dhairya, N., 'Misuse of veto power in the UN Security Council' (2019, February 28) YKA.

<<https://www.youthkiawaz.com/2019/02/veto-power-its-mishandling/>>

⁴²'Due to use of veto, UNSC at times failed to fulfil its responsibility to maintain peace: G4' (2022, March 8) The Economic Times

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/due-to-use-of-veto-uns-c-at-times-failed-to-fulfill-its-responsibility-to-maintain-peace-g-4/articleshow/90084674.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst>

⁴³Supra at 42

⁴⁴Avilash, R., 'Is UN Security Council inept in resolving climate change' (2021, December 29) Down to Earth. <<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/climate-change/is-un-security-council-inept-in-resolving-climate-change--80900>>

⁴⁵Nabil, E., 'Failure of the International Security System' (2018, March 3) The Cairo Review <<https://www.thecaireview.com/global-forum/failure-of-the-international-security-system/>>

⁴⁶Council on Foreign Relations, *The UN Security Council* (2021, August 12). <<https://www.cfr.org/background/un-security-council>>

⁴⁷Muhammet, G., 'Representational problems in the current UN Security Council' (2019, September 24) Daily Sabah.

<<https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2019/09/24/representation-problems-in-the-current-un-security-council>>

e) *Presence of specialised environmental bodies in the United Nations*

The last argument that I would like to put forth is the fact that just as UNSC is not an organ designed to handle specialised matters; on the other hand, the United Nations has multiple bodies that deal specifically with the issue of Environment. The Economic and Social Council, also one of the main organs of the United Nations is designed specially to deal with all the specialist committees that work under the aegis of the UN, including the ones on Environment.⁴⁸

The IPCC,⁴⁹ is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change established by the UNEP and the WMO in 1988 to provide clear insights into climate change and its potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts. The UNFCCC Secretariat provides organizational support and technical expertise thereby facilitating the flow of authoritative information on the impact of climate. The Green Climate Fund catalyses financial resources to developing countries for climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. The UNEP is the voice for the environment within the UN. The UNISDR coordinates efforts within the UN for disaster preparedness and mitigation. Lastly, WMO coordinates monitoring of meteorological patterns, including those indicative of climate change.

In the presence of such large number of International environmental agencies; giving the responsibility of dealing with environment related conflicts to UNSC doesn't seem like the right choice.

VI. Conclusion

It has become evidently clear that there is indeed an increasing number of conflicts that the world is witnessing driven largely because of the change in climate as well as due to the consequences that the changing climate ensues. There is a need to recognize and acknowledge this link and only then can steps be taken to address the issue properly. Therefore, Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 16 should not be looked at individually but as complementary to each other. Linking both of these will bring two different realms of security and conflict prevention; and climate change within the ambit of each other. The first step towards rectifying a problem and to find its solution entails acknowledging the existence of that problem and

⁴⁸ECOSOC, *What does ECOSOC do* (n.d.)

<<https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/meetings/2005/hl2005/ECOSOCinfo%20rev%20et.pdf>>

⁴⁹United Nations, *UN Conferences on climate change* (n.d.)

<<https://research.un.org/en/climate-change/un>>

therefore, there is a need to acknowledge and address the fact that off-late climate change has had a bearing on the security of the people and has also become a cause of conflict among the people and the nations. Moving forward, we need to keep this connection in mind in order to properly tackle the challenges surrounding the same.

As regards the issue of including climate induced conflicts within the mandate of the Security Council; the proposal seems to be tempting. Giving the responsibility of preventing and/or avoiding conflicts, even if due to climate change; to the UNSC doesn't seem something out of the ordinary. This is so because, the UNSC is already tasked with the responsibility of preventing conflicts and ensuring security; additionally, it is the only organ of the United Nations that actually has the power to carry out its resolutions by way of sanctions and even force if need be. Therefore, looking at things from this perspective, it seems a fairly good idea to include within the mandate of the UNSC, the responsibility of addressing climate induced security risks as well. But, since every good thing comes with some caveat, so does this responsibility.

Expanding the mandate of the Security Council without laying out the ground rules and without reforming the Security Council first would prove to be detrimental towards the cause of climate induced conflicts. Since, environment and climate change are the topics of global concern, moving ahead with the said proposal without ensuring non-discrimination and equity would actually worsen the already worsened situation. Thus, there is a need to envision the whole issue holistically before moving forward with any ideas. A thing done in haste often makes waste and doing so at an international level would not only not address the issue at hand but would also lead to wastage of precious resources in terms of money, time, global efforts and aspirations of thousands of people that are facing this situation in their lives. I would therefore, conclude by saying that although the intention behind the proposal is good, the community at large needs to give a serious thought as to its proper implementation and execution before moving ahead with anything.