

**UN Security Council  
Open Debate  
on  
Addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters  
on international peace and security**

**Under the agenda item  
Maintenance of international peace and security**

**Statement by  
Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin  
Permanent Representative**

**25 January 2019**

**Mr. President,**

Climate Change is an unprecedented challenge to global civilization.

2. We, therefore, thank you for providing an opportunity for articulating views on specific aspects of this overarching issue.
3. We also thank the briefers for their perspectives that visible impacts of slow onset phenomena and increased extreme weather events are disrupting life in a manner never envisaged before.

**Mr. President,**

4. India believes that Climate Action should be a priority area for international cooperation. Global institutions should be responsive to felt human needs, including disaster preparedness, as well as resilience and response in the face of disasters.

5. Such phenomena tend to threaten human well-being. Also, in some cases, such as rising sea levels, the integrity of States is at stake, even in the absence of violence and conflict.

6. On the other hand, from a policy perspective, as the IPCC Fifth Assessment report chapter on human security summarized:

*"The evidence on the effect of climate change and variability on violence is contested."*

7. Thus, while Climate risks are evident in some specific cases, research findings on generalized linkages between climate disasters and security remain ambiguous.

**Mr. President,**

8. The nexus between Climate Change and Security is complex, contingent, and still contested. Hence, we as practitioners wanting to address such matters through international cooperation, face dilemmas.

9. The contestation is about what manner, which aspects and which global governance mechanisms are best suited to tackle these phenomena.

10. For want of time, I will highlight three of the multiplicity of nettlesome issues.

➤ **First,**

Can "Climate Security" be achieved through the 'quick fix' of securitization of Climate Change to address climate-related disasters?

**Mr. President,**

Since international peace and security considerations often trump other considerations, defining a problem as a security challenge often upgrades attention and resources devoted to addressing it.

Securitizing Climate Change may help heighten public awareness. It may even help in surmounting opposition. But securitization also carries significant downsides.

A securitized approach risks pitting States into a competition, when cooperation is clearly the most productive avenue in tackling this threat.

Thinking in security terms usually engenders overly militarized solutions to problems, which inherently require non-military responses to resolve. In short, it brings the wrong actors to the table. As the saying goes, "If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail".

➤ **Second,**

Are climate related disasters amenable to processes and solutions used to tackle threats to international peace and security?

Put another way, can Mitigation and Adaptation strategies be fulfilled through enforcement actions? Can those who cite counter terrorism and non-proliferation actions by the Council as pathways for punitive measures, explain who is the 'other', to be held accountable for Climate Disasters? Will it be those who do not fulfil their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement? Will those who do not provide Climate financing as committed be forced to provide such support? Or will inconvenient truths be sidestepped ?

➤ **Third,**

Can the needs of Climate Justice be served by shifting climate law making from the inclusive United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to decision making by a structurally unrepresentative institution with an exclusionary approach decided in secretive deliberations?

The disruptive spillover of such a change, made through a mere decision of the Council, on the UNFCCC process and the Paris Agreement, as well as on the other multilateral organs currently engaged in cooperatively tackling Climate Change, and indeed on multilateral law making, is real.

**Mr. President,**

11. We weigh in favour of a cautionary approach on this contested subject.

12. India supports a path that promotes cooperation to achieve our common goal of preventing and addressing serious disasters linked to Climate Change. To address such issues, we need to collaborate on Climate Actions, consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

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