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Reforming the United Nations to Save the Planet: The Threat of Global Climate Change Making Reform Inevitable

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Reforming the United Nations to Save the Planet: The Threat of Global Climate Change Making Reform Inevitable

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ABSTRACT

The UN, which is to a great extent the end product of the World War II, and the UN Security Council, its most important organ with five permanent member states responsible for sustaining international system's security, is highly incapable of solving the global problems that the mankind faces today. The five permanent member states' veto right about the UN Security Council decisions concerning enforcement decisions and military interventions mostly due to their global interests, decreases the operational power of the UN with regards to protection and formation of peace. In this context, this article will first assess the current status of the UN and its reform attempts, and subsequently, it will analyze the global climate change as a new parameter that started to make the reform of this international organization with evolving supportive international law and enforcement power, highly inevitable.

Keywords: UN Reform, Global Governance, Paris Agreement, Global Climate Change

Dünya'yı Kurtarmak için Birleşmiş Milletleri Reforme Etmek: Küresel İklim Değişikliği Tehlikesi Reformu Kaçınılmaz Kılıyor

ÖZET

II. Dünya Savaşı sonrası uluslararası ilişkiler ortamının bir ürünü olan BM ve onun uluslararası sistemin güvenliğini sağlaması beklenen en kilit organı durumundaki beş daimi üyeye sahip BM Güvenlik Konseyi, günümüz koşullarının ihtiyaçlarını karşılamaktan oldukça uzaktır. Çok önemli uluslararası sorunlarda BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin beş daimi üyesinin bir ya da daha fazlasının küresel çıkarları çerçevesinde olası yaptırım kararlarını ve askeri müdahaleleri veto etmeleri ile BM'nin barışın tesisi ve korunması yönündeki operasyonel gücü oldukça kısıtlanmaktadır. Bu çerçevede bu makale, BM'nin mevcut durumu ve reform çabalarını inceledikten sonra, bu yapının dönüşümünü ve uluslararası hukuk desteği ile yaptırım gücü olan bir forma dönüşmesini zorunlu hale getirmeye başlayan küresel ısınma ve iklim değişikliği sorunu üzerinde duracaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: BM Reformu, Küresel Yönetişim, Paris Antlaşması, Küresel Isınma, İklim Değişikliği

The United Nations and the Calls for Reform

Today, the United Nations (UN) is the most important international organization where one can hope the development of a justice based global governance model, which increases the living standards of the mankind, finds peaceful solutions to international conflicts and protects world's habitat. Historically, only the European Union (EU) could be partly successful in creating such a solidarity based supranational democratic/participatory model (albeit at the regional level), which to a limited extent also provided welfare policies to its citizens. However, the on-going global economic slowdown (particularly following the 2008 global economic crisis) and the increasing of global security related problems (including the recently rising global terrorist threats) once again showed that on a globalized planet, where the plight of everyone everywhere determines and is determined by the plights of the others, one can no longer have freedom and democracy in one country or only in a few select countries. The fate of freedom and democracy in each land is decided and settled on a global scale – and only at that stage it can be defended with a realistic chance of lasting success. Therefore, besides regional attempts of integration and solidarity development (such as the EU), further strengthening of the global governance forms (particularly, the UN) is an absolute necessity to fight with the global problems that are facing us today. Historically, the UN (and its predecessor LN) worked for the peaceful coexistence of the world nations, peaceful settlement of the international conflicts, the economic and social development of the world and the protection of the world's habitat.¹

Yet, for quite a long time, the UN is criticized for not being able to prevent international conflicts and due to the hegemony of important global actors (such UN Security Council member countries) in its decisions. Also, the “international law commission meetings” of the UN are regularly criticized in international arena as the governments generally ignore their conclusions and refrain from accepting its recommendations when formulating conventions.² Furthermore, as some of the UN decisions have not been implemented by the member states in the past; such as the Suez Canal decision and its limited implementation by Egypt and the USSR in late 1950s, several criticisms about the UN system have been always in the agenda. Moreover, from time to time, the UN is considered as highly inefficient with regards to globally challenging issues such as pandemics, global climate change, conventional and nuclear proliferation.

Undoubtedly, one should keep in mind that as the UN Charter does not give the UN an authority to directly intervene to the territorial jurisdiction areas and sovereignty of the member states, the functioning and the further development UN are directly related with the goodwill and the approval of its members. Due to the limited power of the UN in shaping and influencing world politics, numerous reform calls have been made, especially since the 1990s, to change the position of the UN in the international system. During the last decades several analysts have even argued that due to its ineffective policies, the UN should be fully eliminated. However, there are also analysts that insist that the UN can be transformed to a very strong world government.³

Frequently, the reform of the Security Council is suggested by changing its permanent member states, which were decided upon in 1945. Yet, as the shape of world politics has changed a lot in the following decades, it is argued that the permanent members of the Security Council do not represent

1 Malcolm D. Evans, *International Law*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010.

2 Phillipe Sands, Pierre Klein and Derek W. Bowett, *Bowett's Law of International Institutions*, London, Thomson Reuters, 2009.

3 Nicholas Onuf, *International Legal Theory: Essays and Engagements, 1966-2006*, New York, Routledge, 2008, p.157-171.

the global balance of power politics today. Another reform call is related with the Secretariat, and the critics argue that the transparency of the UN Secretariat is highly doubtful. In this context, several administrative reforms have been suggested to increase the effectiveness, accountability and the transparency of the UN Secretariat. Some of these reform attempts have been partly successful, particularly the ones about the structure of the Secretariat, in the last decades.

Further democratization of the UN is also frequently suggested, and the direct election of Secretary General by the General Assembly, ICJ judges, and the General Assembly representatives by the citizens of the democratic countries is particularly proposed.⁴ Moreover, financial reforms, such as taxation of guns and military capabilities of the member states, and the funding of the UN institutions by development of global funds are regularly suggested. The enlargement of the scope of the UN's human rights related capabilities and increasing of its enforcement power against the human rights violations have also been at the center of the reform debates.

However, due to the difficulty of amending the UN Charter, it is unlikely that any of these reform attempts will be successful, particularly without a consensus on a substantive reform attempt including the Security Council reform.⁵ The main reason behind this is the difficulty of reaching a consensus on important matters, particularly because of globally competing state sovereignties.⁶ As a result, the steps that have been taken for reform have remained as highly trivial in the past decades.⁷ Yet, as the atmosphere that developed the UN following the WWII continues today and the ending up of the Cold War did not lead to a total transformation of the international system, which was deeply constructed following the WWII, it may also be futile to expect a major transformation in the UN's structure at least in the short run.⁸

Undoubtedly, the reform of the UN necessitates a better functioning bureaucracy, which is ultimately related with the budget endowed by the member-states to its organs.⁹ A broader representation in the Security Council is necessary, however, besides representation, the UN also needs better decisions and a global vision to deal with the problems of the world today and this requires excellent human resources and bureaucratic capacity. Therefore, besides representation, bureaucratic efficiency and technocratic problem solving capacity, which directly related with a bigger budget, is absolutely crucial for increasing the legitimacy and efficiency of the UN.¹⁰

The reluctance of the G20 countries to reform and finance the UN also impedes the UN's global effectiveness. The rich countries' disinclination to change the major economic picture of the international system (favoring the rich), and the rising economic gap between the North and the South of the world, made the reform of the UN and joint fundraising for its initiatives to solve global

4 Anne-Marie Slaughter, "Security, Solidarity, and Sovereignty: The Grand Themes of UN Reform", *American Journal of International Law*, Vol.99, No.3, 2005, p.619-631.

5 Bruce Cronin and Ian Hurd, *The UN Security Council and the Politics of International Authority*, London, Routledge, 2008.

6 Thomas G. Weiss, "Fundamental UN Reform: A Non-starter or Not?", *Global Policy*, Vol.2, Issue 2, 2011, p.196-202.

7 David Forsythe *et. al.*, *The United Nations and Changing World Politics*, Westview, Boulder, 2010.

8 Thomas G. Weiss, *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It?*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2009.

9 See Kofi Annan, "The Quiet Revolution", *Global Governance*, Vol.4, No.2, 1998, p.123-138; Kofi Annan, "Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security, and Human Rights for All", *UN document A/59/2005*, 2005; Thomas G. Weiss and Karen E. Young, "Compromise and Credibility: Security Council Reform?", *Security Dialogue*, Vol.36, No.2, 2005, p.131-154; Thomas G. Weiss, "Overcoming the Security Council Impasse: Envisioning Reform", *Occasional Paper 14*, Berlin, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2005; Weiss, *What's Wrong with the United Nations*.

10 Kofi Annan, "The Quiet Revolution", *Global Governance*, Vol.4, No.2, 1998, p.123-138

problems (such as UNICEF, UNFP, and UNDP), a more daunting task.¹¹ Furthermore, the UN system still has no powerful brain today. UN Secretaries General are supposedly in charge, but the individual units have their own heads, budgets and governance. This makes it more difficult for the UN to act as “one”.¹²

Therefore, one can say that although the UN is the most powerful intergovernmental organization today, national politics and economic interests still play a vital role in its functioning. As a result, the UN could be only partly successful with regards to finding diplomatic solutions to international conflicts, orchestrating aid to the poor geographies of the world, punishing the aggressor states, functioning as a forum for international debates and discussions, development of international law and its enforcement, increasing of awareness with regards to important global issues (such as global climate change and environmental pollution), and the coordination of fight against health related international emergencies (such as the Ebola outbreak and several other pandemics including HIV) in the past.¹³

Furthermore, a major UN reform effort necessities a novel and global welfare based philosophical approach, where “global politics” catches up with “global markets”.¹⁴ As Immanuel Wallerstein argued decades ago, if politics is solely left in the hands of pure market forces it gradually demolishes democratic/civilian models. Furthermore, at the global level, it strengthens the hegemony of a certain group of countries’ big capital owners.¹⁵ In this context, a redefinition of politics by means of a liberal-social synthesis is highly necessary. This will be a 3rd way (as Andre Gunder Frank, Anthony Giddens and several others argued) where the so-called “Invisible Hand” of capitalism, which has generally been an “iron hand in a velvet glove” for the poor, will be transformed to a “social egalitarian hand”, by means of the welfare policies of the state mechanisms, preferably at the supranational level.¹⁶ Following the “Great Depression” nation-states have been successful in this endeavor, albeit at the national level, which was tactfully analyzed by Karl Polanyi in his “Great Transformation”.¹⁷ In Zygmund Bauman’s words; “The project of freedom from fear pursued through the social state was perhaps the boldest endeavor ever consciously undertaken by humanity, along with the resolve it gathered to see it through.”¹⁸

Similarly in a reformed UN, citizens’ solidarity, hitherto limited to the nation-state may be expanded to the citizens of the model in such a way that, for example, Swedes and Portuguese, Germans, Greeks, Turks, Brazilians, Americans and Russians are willing to stand up for one another. Therefore, the first target groups of such a global “project” are not governments, but social movements and non-governmental organizations, e.g. the active members of a civil society, which extends across the borders of a nation. This necessitates the development of a new societal perception about the need for a strong and binding global governance model. In Robert Fine’s wording:

11 Weiss, *What’s Wrong with the United Nations*, p.19-50.

12 Weiss, “Fundamental UN Reform”, p.199.

13 Marcus Franda, *The United Nations in the Twenty First Century*, Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

14 Jurgen Habermas, *The Post-National Constellation: Political Essays*, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 2001, p.109.

15 Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy 1600-1750*, London, Academic Press, 2011.

16 See Andre Gunter Frank, *The World System: Five Hundred Years or Five Thousand?* London, Routledge, 1996; Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1998.

17 Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, New York, Beacon Press, 2001.

18 Zygmunt Bauman, *In Search of Politics*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1999.

This will be a way of thinking that declares its opposition to all forms of ethnic nationalism and religious fundamentalism as well as to the economic imperatives of global capitalism. It perceives the integrity of contemporary political life and the world's habitat as threatened both by globalization of markets and by regressive forms of revolt against globalization, and aims to reconstruct political and natural life on the basis of an enlightened vision of peaceful relations between nation-states, environment friendly production, human rights shared by all world citizens, and a global legal order buttressed by a global civil society.¹⁹

In this context, a more alarming situation that may function as a catalyst for the development of such a "solidarity based global civil society" started to emerge with the rising temperatures leading to global climate change during the last decades. This development has the potential to end the whole human civilization and life on earth and therefore this pressing threat against the world's habitat increases the importance of a reformed and stronger UN having the capacity to tackle with such global problems facing us today.

The Threat of Global Climate Change on World's Habitat: A Catalyst for UN Reform?

Today, even the most powerful governments became dependent on the globalized markets and are less able to politically frame macro level policies. Therefore, both the welfare state functions for the ones in need and the protection of the environment and the world's habitat can be maintained on the previous scale, if they are transferred from the nation-state to larger political units (such as the UN), and thus politically balance the negative outcomes of the trans-nationalized free-market economy. In this context, the historically significant "Paris Agreement" adopted at the Paris Climate Summit of the "UN Conference on Climate Change", that convened between 30 November-12 December 2015, has been a contemporary crucial development. On 22nd of April 2016, the countries started to sign the "Paris Agreement" and its process of entry into force has also officially started.

Although the hydrocarbons have been used for more than 120 years and their emissions have been a major threat for the future of the mankind, the first step to limit these emissions could only be taken in 1972. Following the industrial revolution, the mankind started to consume hydrocarbons in gradually increasing amounts and this process has further speeded up particularly during the second half of the 19th century. The cars, planes, ships, trains and other transport related and unrelated machines' (including power plants) main energy source has gradually become the hydrocarbons. Although several improvements have been made in the past, the efficiency of most of these vehicles and machines have been very low, but their emission levels remained relatively high. Also, the cooler gases of the cooling systems have been another reason of the pollution of the atmosphere. Consequently, the levels of greenhouse gasses, such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur, HFC and PFC, have risen in the world's atmosphere, and they started to play a key role in global climate change.

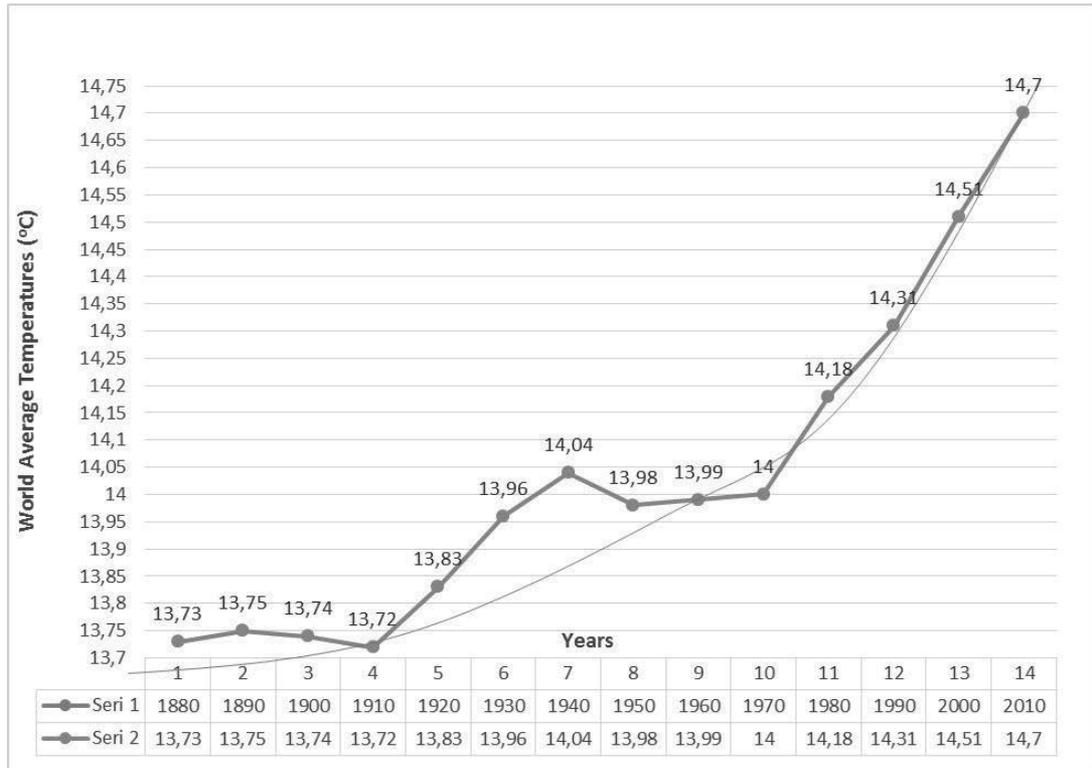
Horace Benedict de Saussure has first developed global climate change hypothesis in 1760 and Joseph Fourier has done the first experiment about the greenhouse gas effect in 1827. In 1896, Arhenius argued that if the carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere changes by 40%, this may lead to the start of an ice age. According to World Meteorological Organization data, the hottest average temperatures of the earth have been measured in 1998, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 respectively, compared with the first measurement levels done in 1861. As several greenhouses gases, primarily the

19 Robert Fine, "Taking the 'ism' out of cosmopolitanism", *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol.6, 2003.

carbon dioxide, are not considered as acute and toxic gases for the mankind and the world's ecosystem (particularly for its atmosphere) for quite a long time, the steps that are taken to limit them could only be taken very recently.²⁰ The greenhouse gases, most important ones being carbon dioxide, methane, chlorofluorocarbons and nitric oxide, have increased the average temperatures of the earth by 0.9 °C since 1850. Unfortunately, 0.6 °C of this increase have taken place after 1950s.²¹

The Figure 1 shows the average temperature rise of the earth between 1880 and 2010. One can clearly see that a very serious rise has been witnessed in this period. What's more, if this trend goes similarly in the near future, this rise will become totally irreversible. A radical increase in the average temperatures has taken place after the 1970s. Moreover, 53.36% of the average temperature rise between 1880 and today, have taken place in the years following the 1970s.

Figure 1 Average Global Temperatures, 1880-2011 Fluctuations²²



The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) that convened in 1972 was the first crucial step to create a mechanism for solving the problems leading to the pollution of the atmosphere and the global climate change.²³ Although regular meetings have been organized to solve these problems particularly in the years following the 1990, any important decisions could not be taken.

20 "Kyoto Protocol Elasticity Mechanisms and Other International Emission Trade Systems Commission Report", Turkish Ministry of Environment and Forestry, General Directorate for Environmental Management, Ankara, 2008, p.5.

21 Ahmet Samsunlu, "Küresel Isınma ve 2015 BM Paris İklim Zirvesi (COP21)", *Su ve Çevre*, Vol.90, January 2016, p.1.

22 Data taken from "NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies".

23 Etem Karakaya and Emrah Sofuoğlu, "İklim Değişikliği Müzakerelerine Bir Bakış: 2015 Paris İklim Zirvesi", *International Symposium on Eurasia Energy Issues*, 28-30 May 2015, Izmir, Turkey.

In 1992, the countries have concluded that a global joint action plan is necessary, and furthermore, the big industrialized countries' support of this initiative is of utmost importance to prevent the pollution of the atmosphere and speeding up of global climate change. In this context, several international conferences have convened under the auspices of the UN in 1994, 1995, 1997, 2007, 2009, and 2015.

The signing process of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has started with the "Rio Environment and Development Conference" in 1992, and it has entered into force on 21 March 1994. In this conference, "Convention to Combat Desertification" and "Convention on Biological Diversity" has also been accepted. 1994 conference and the following conferences are named as "COP - Conference of the Parties". COP is the prime decision-making body of the Convention.

The COP1 has been the first conference, which has convened in Berlin-Germany within the scope of the UNFCCC. German Environment Minister of the time Angela Merkel has chaired this meeting and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) have also been established during this event. Also, COP1 mandated an ad hoc working group to negotiate a protocol aimed at decreasing the carbon emissions by 20% compared with 1990, however, this was not accepted by the participating countries and instead a new process has been suggested which led to the signing of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 with similar terms, which was the most important step in limiting carbon emissions.²⁴

COP2 has convened in Geneva-Switzerland in July 1996 and the majority of the participating countries have refused the suggestion of lower emission targets, instead, they favored more binding long-term targets. COP 3 has convened in Kyoto-Japan in 1997 and following intense negotiations, the Kyoto Protocol has been accepted. The industrialized countries and several central European countries have accepted to lower their greenhouse gas emissions by 6-8% when compared with their record in 1990. Although, as the greatest emitter (at the time), the USA has accepted to lower its emissions by 7%, it (never ratified the Protocol and) announced that it won't abide by this requirement in 2001. COP4 has convened in Buenos Aires-Argentina in 1998 and developed a 2-year new action plan to solve the problems related with the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. COP7 has been convened in 2001 in Marakesh-Morocco and Turkey has been removed from list of developed countries in Annex II at this COP. The decision did not dissolve Turkey of its GHG emissions related responsibilities, but only financial and technological support obligations of Annex II group. Turkey would again become a party the Convention in 2004.

COP15 has convened in Copenhagen-Denmark in 2009. Outcome of the COP15 was the "Copenhagen Accord" (prepared by USA, Brazil, China, India and South Africa), a non-binding document, of which COP only took note. A temperature goal of maximum 2 °C increase in average world temperatures compared with the preindustrial period is set.

Also, the developed countries have agreed that they will support the activities of the developing countries to combat with the global climate change with 100 billion USD. Although not a binding agreement, the Copenhagen Accord called for countries to submit their emissions targets. These pledges were then compiled in Cancun COP decision as Parties' 2020 targets.²⁵

COP 19 has convened in Warsaw-Poland in 2013. It endorsed the notion of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) as the form of Parties' pledges towards the Paris Agreement. That said, the participating countries could not agree on how to finance the fight against global climate

24 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Website, <http://unfccc.int>. (Accessed on 10 April 2016).

25 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Website, <http://unfccc.int>. (Accessed on 20 March 2016).

change. Only, a rather vague “International Warsaw Mechanism” for global climate change related losses and damages has been created.²⁶

COP 21 has convened in Paris-France and during this meeting a comprehensive presentation has been made, which showed that global water scarcity will be a major problem, the dust storms and hurricanes will damage the agricultural production in several continents, the sea levels will rise, coral reefs will disappear, and 30% of plants, animals and humans on earth’s will die, the food prices will rise by 85%, if the average temperature of the earth increases more than 2 °C compared with 1880. If the average temperatures rise around 5 °C compared with 1880, the sea levels will rise 5 meters, all the world’s food reserves will deplete, and billions of people will have to immigrate to survive.²⁷

According to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) 5th Evaluation Report published in 2014 (prepared by 300 scientists from more than 70 countries), the total greenhouse gas emissions should not exceed 2900 giga tonnes for reaching the target of a maximum 2 °C increase in average world temperatures compared with 1880.²⁸ Unfortunately, 2/3 of this total emission has been already emitted and for not surpassing the target of maximum 2 °C increase, every year, 100 billion USD should be invested for energy efficiency. The EU currently agreed on a 40% decrease in its emissions in 2030 compared with 1990, the USA agreed on a 28% decrease in its emissions in 2025 compared with 2005, and China agreed on a net decrease by 2030, India agreed on a 35% decrease in its emissions in 2030 compared with 2005, Mexico agreed to decrease carbon emissions by 25% in 2030 compared with 2005, and South Korea agreed to decrease carbon emissions by 37% in 2030 compared with 2005. Turkey agreed to decrease carbon emissions by 21% in 2030 compared with its normal trend. That said, it should be noted that these were all non-binding pledges of the aforementioned countries.

The Figure 2 below shows the annual CO₂ emissions of several group of countries and here one can clearly see that although several decisions to limit these emissions have been taken in the past, there has been a steady rise in the emission level of countries. The Kyoto Protocol, which entered into force in 2005, has included a 5% decrease in carbon emissions between 2008 and 2012.²⁹ However, the biggest emitters such as USA, Canada, Japan, Iceland and Australia (important OECD members, High Income Level, Fig. 2) continued to pollute the world with their emissions during those years. As giant industrial producers China and India has also continued to pollute the atmosphere with their emissions in a very speedily increasing trend (China, India, Fig. 2). There has only been a slight decrease in OECD and EU’s emissions in line with the Kyoto Protocol during the last decade. The biggest emitters have been the high income and OECD member states and during the last two-decade low the income countries, particularly India and China, started to also reach their levels. Also, emissions patterns have changed dramatically in the last decades. For example, China’s emissions surpassed that of the US. Another issue is that China did not promise emissions reduction under the Kyoto Protocol since it was classified as a developing country. Unfortunately, these figures are proving that the global climate change will continue to be a major problem of the mankind in the coming decades.

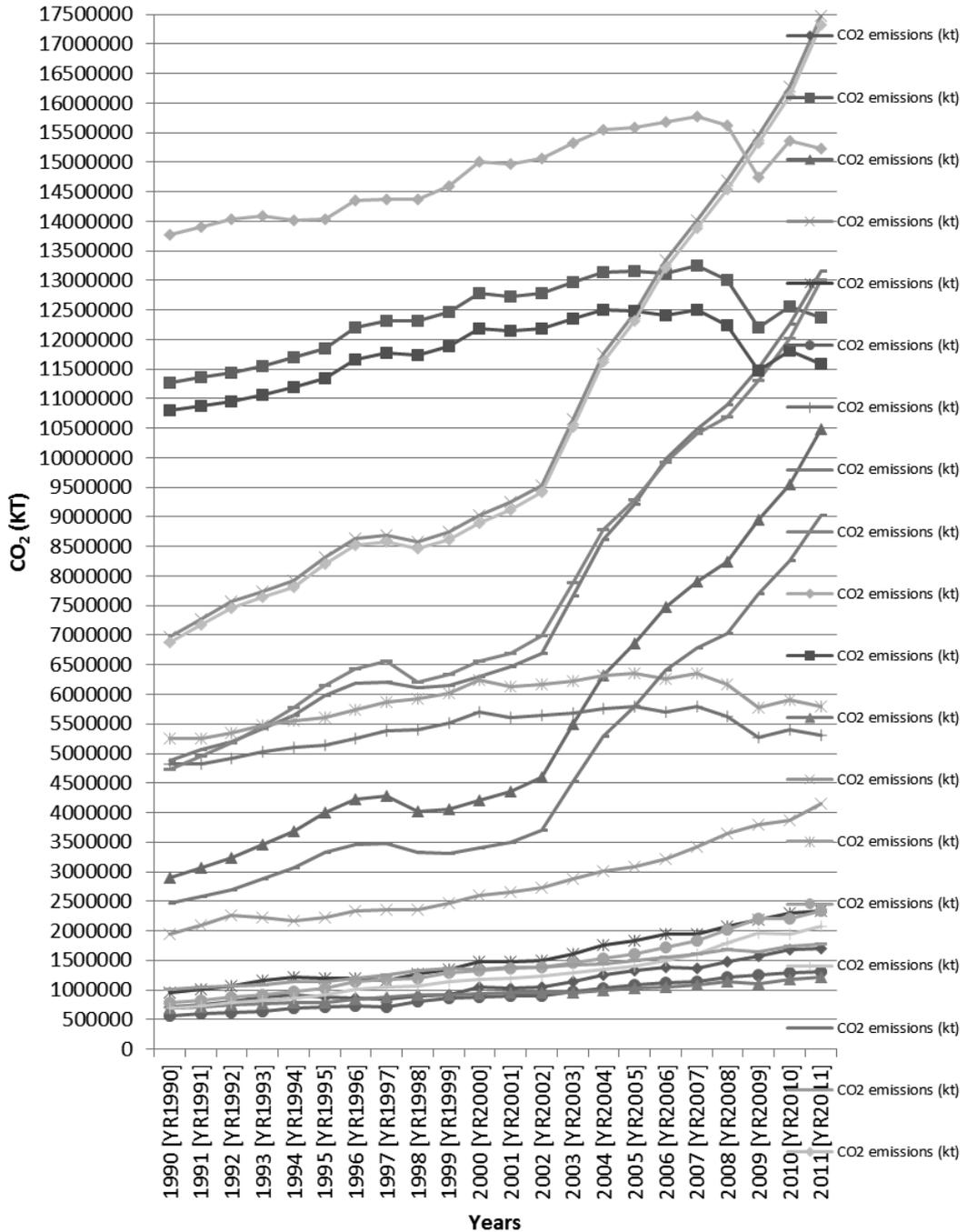
26 Ibid.

27 “Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change” presentation during COP 21, 30 Nov.-12 Dec. 2015, Paris, France.

28 “5th Evaluation Report”, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC), 2014. IPCC Website, <http://www.ipcc.ch>, (Accessed on 26 January 2016).

29 “Text of Kyoto Protocol”, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Website, <http://unfccc.int>, (Accessed on 20 April 2016).

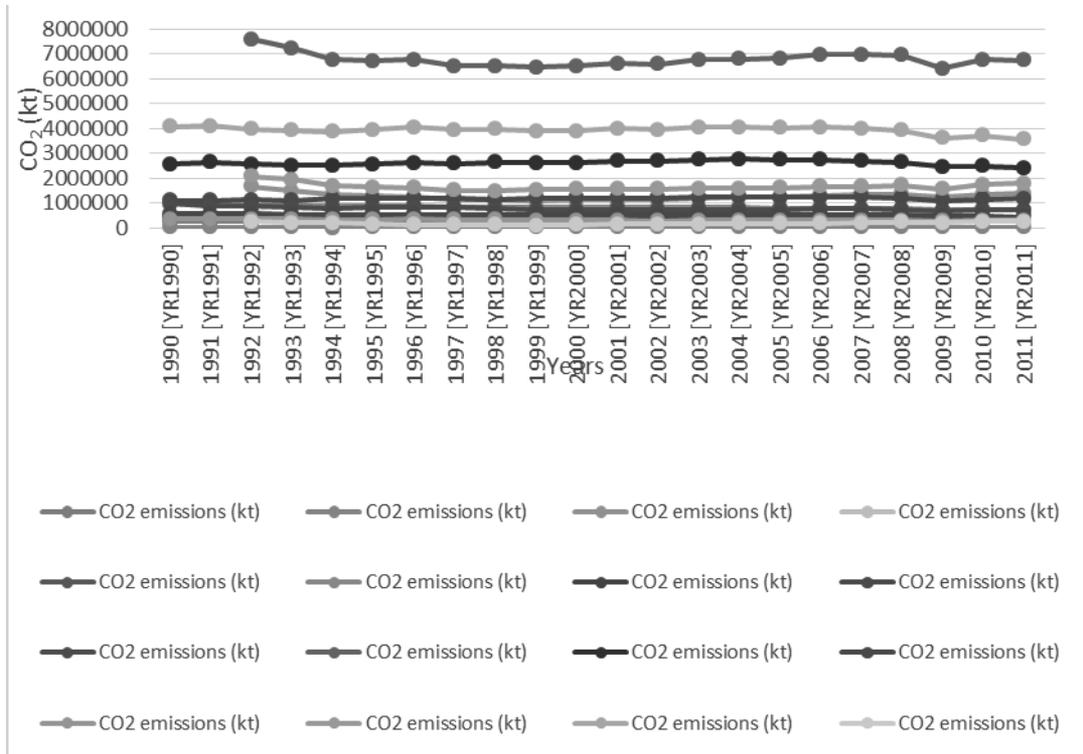
Figure 2 Annual CO₂ Emissions of Developed Countries (Top Emitters)³⁰



30 Data taken from the World Bank, World Development Indicators, “CO₂ Emissions (KT)”. (<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&type=metadata&series=EN.ATM.CO2E.KT>, (Accessed on 03 April 2016)).

The Figure 3 shows the countries that managed to have a minimal decrease in their carbon emission levels in the past. As it can be seen from this figure this decrease has been highly trivial compared with the overall trend of rise at the global level.

Figure 3 Emission Decrease by Countries (1990-2011)³¹



How Can the UN Protect Our Climate System?

In literature, establishment of a legitimate and international regime is considered as absolutely crucial to slow down the global climate change.³² Hence, besides figuring out what to do, the development of binding legislation and its implementation by a coordinating institution is regularly suggested. In practice, UNFCCC is considered as a legitimate initiative to start this task due to its affiliation with the UN. In this context, if the recent Paris Agreement enters into force, it will be the strongest and most detailed document ever agreed upon with regards to greenhouse gases emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance starting in the year 2020. Yet, there should be strong leadership by important members of the international community (major economies of the world) to achieve this target and for its following smooth implementation. Also, both North and South's major economies should be included in this newly developing regime. If G8 and China, India, Russia, Brazil and South Africa reaches to a consensus and leads, more binding legislation can also be prepared in the future and the existing ones can be implemented without obstacles. Unfortunately, quite contrarily, the G8 has done

³¹ Data taken from the World Bank, World Development Indicators, "CO₂ Emissions (KT)".

³² Jing Huang, "A Leadership of Twenty (L20) Within the UNFCCC: Establishing a Legitimate and Effective Regime to Improve Our Climate System", *Global Governance*, Vol.15, No.4, 2009. p.437.

little in the past with regards to preventing climate change, poverty eradication, water crisis, energy security and food supply.³³ On sustainability related problems emanating from the global industrial production, the rich world has also historically taken very few steps. Therefore, the catching up economies such as India and China are generally critical of the rich worlds' suggestions to them with regards to lowering carbon emissions and environmentally friendly industrial production.³⁴

Also, a development policy that does not take into account global climate change is unsustainable. Therefore, transformation of development policy towards being more environment friendly is crucial to slow down global climate change. Sustainable development planning on issues such as poverty reduction, rural development, disaster preparedness should all be tackled with by taking into account global climate change and relevant international organizations, such the UNDP, should be convinced about this necessity by means of global level civil society and NGO lobbying.³⁵

Unfortunately, today, the world's carbon economy still embeds fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas) into the fabric of its infrastructure.³⁶ Therefore, a major decline in carbon emissions does not seem probable at least in the short run. To prevent global climate change, more steps should be taken on the side of the UN particularly by means of also its specialized agencies (such as UNEP and UNDP). In this context, the specialized agencies of the UN should be provided with more institutional and the financial means to slow down the global climate change. Moreover, the UN bureaucracy and its member states should also start considering the global climate change also as a major security threat for all the nations of the world.

In 2003 Pentagon has commissioned scenario analysts to study the impact of global climate change on the USA's security and the analysts concluded that it is the "mother of all security threats".³⁷ Similarly, the United Nations Security Council should start considering global climate change as a major security threat for all the mankind and keep it on top of its policy agenda. Indeed, due to famine and food shortages it is creating, global climate change could be the reason of future wars and this has very recently started to be discussed in the UN circles.³⁸

Particularly, Africa will be main continent where due to global climate change the countries can edge to brink of war and again the UN seems to be the only institution to take steps to prevent such an outcome. For instance, in the past, the famine in Darfur-Sudan brought rival groups into competition for resources and low-level local violence has been seen in northern Nigeria.³⁹ Volatile weather patterns have the capacity to reshape productive landscapes of entire regions. Also, global climate change may lead to unregulated migration movements felt beyond national borders. Moreover, global climate change triggers natural disasters, sea level rises and infectious disease spikes, which may all lead to conflicts in several regions of the world. All of these show that if the global climate change is not

33 Ibid. p.438-439

34 Dieter Helm, "Climate-Change Policy: Why has so little been achieved?", *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, Vol.24, No.2, 2008, p.211-238.

35 Bert Metz and Marcel Kok (eds.), *Development Policy as a Way to Manage Climate Change Risks*, London, Routledge, 2014.

36 Ibid. p.215.

37 Peter Schwartz and Douglas Randall, *An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and its Implications for United States and National Security*, New York, Environmental Defense, 2003.

38 Browne Oli, Anne Hamill and Robert McLeman, "Climate Change as the New Security Threat: Implications for Africa", *International Affairs*, Vol.83, No.6, 2007, p.1143.

39 Antony Nyong and Charles Fiki, "Draught related conflicts, management and resolution in the West African Sahel: Considerations for Climate Change Research", *Die Erde*, Vol.137, 2006, p.223-248.

taken into the agenda of the UN Security Council in the future, it may be very difficult to keep peace at the global level in the following decades.

One other important issue is that the already signed international treaties lack financial support and institutional means to implement them. In this context, more than two hundred multilateral environmental treaties and more than two thousand bilateral agreements that came into force to protect endangered species, restore the ozone layer, regulate hazardous waste disposal, clean up atmospheric and oceanic pollution, and mitigate climate change cannot be considered as a great success, because condition of the biosphere continues to deteriorate.⁴⁰ This shows that as long as strong leadership does not exist and an institutional framework does not coordinate global level actions, it will very difficult to slow down global climate change. Yet, for this to happen global civil society should also be pushing international organizations and national governments to take action. Hence, non-state actors, particularly the Non-Governmental Organizations are also very important to tackle with the problems emanating from global climate change. Furthermore, a global financial facility should also be created. The governments should be persuaded in such a way that their national interest is tied to the global common good. If this happens, they might be willing to financially support a global financial facility fighting with global climate change⁴¹ and be more willing to support the reform of the international organizations in the same direction. Unfortunately, when one analyses as an exemplar case Turkey, an upper middle income country, there also seems to be a long way to go in this direction. As a country that often refers to its high vulnerability to impacts, Turkey needs to advance its state of science and policy in multiple domains in the near future.⁴² The development of national level consciousness and more active NGO support will also be crucial to push countries like Turkey to take the necessary steps in the future.

Conclusions: Only a Reformed UN with Binding Legislation May Prevent Global Climate Change

One of the main aims of the UN is to protect the security of the mankind and to prevent the pollution of the world's habitat. In this context, it has a major responsibility to protect global equality and justice, and to find solutions to problems that risk the future of the mankind and the life on earth. Today, the biggest problem that endangers the future of the planet is related with global climate change, which will lead to the rise of the sea levels, hurricanes, dust storms, food shortages, draught, and the disappearance of the different species of animals and plants, and even the mankind. A solution to global climate change can only be found by a coalition of the countries within the UN framework, and the binding decisions to be taken within this international organization and their implementation is of utmost importance to prevent the catastrophic outcomes of this growing problem. Particularly, the environment friendly energy and industrial production, and the limiting of the carbon emissions by the UN decisions and development of related international law are crucial.

According to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 5th Evaluation Report published in 2014 (prepared by 300 scientists from more than 70 countries), the negative impact of

40 Hilary French, "Reshaping Global Governance", in *State of the World: A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society*, Washington DC, 2002.

41 N. Brian Winchester, "Emerging Global Environmental Governance", *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, Vol.16, No.1, 2009, p.7-23.

42 Ethemcan Turhan *et.al.*, "Beyond special circumstances: climate change policy in Turkey 1992–2015", *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, Vol.7, Issue 3, 2016, p.448-460.

the global climate change will be mostly visible on the poor, political and economically marginalized segments of the society, and on women and children in the following decades. The report shows that the global climate change will be the major reason of the global social inequality in the 21st century.⁴³ In this context, the UN has a major responsibility to take active role in preventing global climate change in line with its original aims of establishment. However, as long as the power balance within the UN favors the industrialized countries and the developed world, it is difficult to reach to decisions, which would be beneficial for all the humanity. Therefore, the reform and the strengthening of the UN are crucial to fight with this globally alarming situation.

Undoubtedly, the current record of the countries increases the doubts about the implementation of the 2015 Paris Agreement decisions, the most important one being the limiting of average temperature rise of the earth by 1.5 °C until the end of the century compared with 1880. When one studies the trends in Figure 2 and Figure 3, this target seems very difficult to reach. For this to happen, the highest emitters, namely USA, China, EU and OECD member states, and India, should substantially decrease their emissions. Furthermore, there should be considerable emission decrease in the developing countries and unfortunately the current trend is quite the opposite also in this group.

That said, it is undoubtedly the developed world that matters most due to their giant industries and very high carbon emission levels. Yet, besides being reluctant about the UN reform, the major global players of the international system are also lagging far behind in decreasing their carbon emissions. Moreover, the developed world has been moving their blue-collar industrial production to cheap labor countries and thus playing a key role in those countries' rising carbon emissions during the last decades. As long as these countries don't increase their investments to renewable energy sources, focus on energy savings and energy efficiency, and take globally binding steps with supportive international law and reform the international organizations, most important one being the UN, it will be extremely difficult to reverse the catastrophic outcomes of the global climate change in a foreseeable future. That said, developing countries such as China and India are also crucial, as with their giant industrial production capacity they continue to pollute the world's atmosphere. A coordinating institution such as the UN and its specialized agencies can function as a balancing actor between the developing and the developed world in this regard, and can work for increasing their contribution to the protection of world's biosphere.

43 "5th Evaluation Report".

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