

Military Experts from Five Continents warn of Impact of Climate Change on Security

Joint statement calls for ambitious and equitable international agreement on climate

Press release embargoed until 18:00 GMT, 29 October 2009

Washington, D.C., 29 October 2009

A group of serving and retired military officers from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the US released a statement today calling on all governments to “work for an ambitious and equitable international agreement” at the global climate talks in Copenhagen in December.

The statement, presented at a meeting today at Brookings in Washington, and issued simultaneously in Brussels, Dhaka, Georgetown, London, New Delhi and The Hague, says that “incremental, and at times, abrupt, climate change is resulting in an unprecedented scale of human misery, loss of biodiversity and damage to infrastructure with consequential security implications that need to be addressed urgently.”

The officers are part of an international initiative on Climate Change and the Military led by the Institute for Environmental Security (IES) in The Hague and 10 other think tanks from Asia, Europe and North America.

IES Vice-Chair, Tom Spencer, former President of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights and Defence Policy, said the aim of the statement was to stress that “climate change creates a common security problem that requires global and comprehensive co-operation.”

Quoting from the statement, Air Marshal (ret) AK Singh of India, Chairman of the project's Military Advisory Council and Project Director, Climate Change & Security, Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi warned that “failure to recognise the conflict and instability implications of climate change, and to invest in a range of preventative and adaptive actions will be very costly in terms of destabilising nations, causing human suffering, retarding development and providing the required military response.”

Maj Gen (ret) Joseph Singh, Former Chief of Staff, Guyana Defence Force, added that, “Based on the fact that we have been involved in disaster relief operations, we know the trauma, the human misery, the damage to infrastructure. So that hands on experience gives us the confidence that we have some knowledge and expertise that we can share and work in a collaborated way with decision-makers to anticipate, to pre-empt and to be involved in contingency planning.”

Asked to illustrate an experience from his region, U.S. Brig Gen (ret) Wendell C. King replied, “The hurricane Katrina that hit New Orleans.” He added that America's ability to respond was severely stressed and if such a technologically capable nation such as the USA thus struggled, the picture was not too rosy for nations not having adequate capabilities.

At its first meeting in Brussels earlier this month the group of officers were especially concerned about the rapid increase in glacial melt in the Himalayas, which will result in increased flooding followed by devastating water shortages throughout the region.

Maj Gen (ret) Muniruzzaman, President of the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, said that the affects of climate change could lead to the migration of millions of people in places like Bangladesh where the impact of climate change would cause an estimated annual loss to the economy of \$ 1 billion of GDP by 2010 and \$ 5 billion by 2070. Water scarcity will have severe adverse impact on human access to fresh water, food production, fisheries and wildlife, river transports, hydropower and human health according to a report by his institute.

The joint statement calls on all governments to ensure that the security implications of climate change are integrated into their respective military strategies and also calls upon the military to be part of the solution by reducing its own carbon “footprint”.

END

First Statement of the Military Advisory Council

Embargoed until 18:00 GMT, 29 October 2009

The Military Advisory Council of the Climate Change and the Military project, having met in Brussels and Bonn from 7th to 12th October 2009 to assess developments and challenges related to climate change and security, offer the following views to the Parties and Governments of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Noting that the understanding of climate change and its impact on security is growing amongst a wide and diverse audience;

Noting the continuing contribution to environmental security made by many military authorities and scholars, including their role in analysing global environmental change and their actions in responding to the consequences of climate change;

Noting that the military is a large emitter of greenhouse gases, and further noting its application of technology to promote energy efficiency and lower carbon emissions; and

Believing that incremental, and at times abrupt, climate change is resulting in an unprecedented scale of human misery, loss of biodiversity and damage to infrastructure with consequential security implications that need to be addressed urgently;

Believing that failure to recognise the conflict and instability implications of climate change, and to invest in a range of preventative and adaptive actions will be very costly in terms of destabilising nations, causing human suffering, retarding development and providing the required military response;

Believing therefore that climate change creates a common security problem that requires global and comprehensive co-operation;

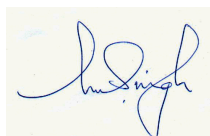
Believing that the military community should contribute to the global process of constructing policy responses to climate change that are strong enough to avoid the risks of such future instability;

Believing that if the COP15 fails to deliver an effective and institutionally robust climate protection system, preserving security and stability even at current levels will become increasingly difficult;

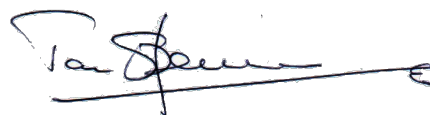
The Military Advisory Council, therefore:

1. **Calls** on all governments to work for an ambitious and equitable international agreement on climate in Copenhagen at the COP 15;
2. **Calls** on all governments to ensure that the security implications of climate change are integrated into their respective military strategies; and
3. **Calls** upon the military to be part of the solution by reducing its own carbon “footprint.”

On behalf of the CCTM Military Advisory Council and the Institute for Environmental Security:



Air Marshal AK Singh (ret)
Chairman, Military Advisory Council / Project
Director, Climate Change & Security, Centre for Air
Power Studies



Tom Spencer
Project Co-ordinator, Climate Change and the
Military /
Vice-Chairman, Institute for Environmental Security

Climate Change and the Military
MILITARY ADVISORY COUNCIL



Chairman

Air Marshal (ret) **AK Singh**, Distinguished Fellow, Project Director, Climate Change & Security, Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS), India

Members

Cheikh Ould Ahmed, Head of Fishery Surveillance, Ministry of Fisheries / Former Director of the Navy, Mauritania

Maj Gen (ret) RNLMC **Kees Homan**, Clingendael Security and Conflict Programme (CSCP), Netherlands Institute for International Relations - Clingendael, The Netherlands

Brig Gen (ret) **Wendell C. King**, Dean, US Army Command and General Staff College, United States

Wg Cdr **Manoj Kumar**, Research Fellow, Climate Change & Security, Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS), India

Rear Admiral **Neil Morisetti**, Climate and Energy Security Envoy, UK Ministry of Defence and Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom

Maj Gen (ret) **Muniruzzaman**, President, Bangladesh Institute for Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), Bangladesh

Lt Gen (ret) **Bala Nanda Sharma**, Nepal

Maj Gen (ret) **Joseph G. Singh**, Former Chief of Staff, Guyana Defence Force, Guyana

Maj (CIMIC) **Piet Wit**, Dutch Army, The Netherlands



BROOKINGS



CHATHAM HOUSE



CNA
ANALYSIS & SOLUTIONS



Institute
for
Environmental
Security

Institute
for
Environmental
Security
NORTH AMERICA



Woodrow Wilson
International
Center
for Scholars

Climate Change and the Military

About the Project

The project on **Climate Change and the Military** - based on the co-operation of a group of leading think tanks, in Asia, Europe and North America – is aimed at sending a strong message from the security sector to the December 2009 climate change negotiations taking place at COP 15 in Copenhagen.

Central to the project is the work of its **Military Advisory Council** consisting of a growing number of serving and retired officers who are committed to stressing their concerns about the security implications of climate change and to promoting a positive role of the military worldwide to help address the challenge of climate change.

The project was launched at the Centre for Air Power Studies in New Delhi on 15 September and at the conference on 'Climate Change and Security at Copenhagen' at the European Parliament in Brussels on 7-8 October 2009.

The **First Statement of the CCTM Military Advisory Council** was adopted on 12 October 2009 for release at a meeting and press conference at Brookings in Washington, DC on 29 October accompanied by simultaneous release in other capitals.

Project Partners:

- Bangladesh Institute for Peace and Security Studies
- Brookings
- Centre for Air Power Studies
- Chatham House – Royal Institute for International Affairs
- Clingendael - Netherlands Institute for International Relations
- CNA
- E3G
- Institute for Environmental Security
- Institute for Environmental Security - North America
- IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature – Commission on Education and Communications
- Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars – Environmental Change and Security Project

For further information:

Climate Change and the Military website: <http://www.envirosecurity.org/cctm/>

Air Marshal (ret) AK Singh
Chairman, Military Advisory Council /
Project Director, Climate Change & Security, Centre for Air Power
Studies
New Delhi
Tel: +91 98 1060 2105
aks47@rediffmail.com

Tom Spencer
Project Co-ordinator, Climate Change and the Military /
Vice-Chairman, Institute for Environmental Security
EU-Office
Brussels
Tel: +32 2 511 5850
E-mail: info@envirosecurity.org