



Change needed in global environmental and climate protection Call for Action Against Military Spending

Pax Christi International recognises the links between peace and sustainability. Pax Christi International is increasingly aware of the links between environment and peace building work, and therefore seeks to encourage more dialogue and cooperation between these two fields at the international level.

There is an urgent need for global action to address our current ecological crisis. Our societies and globalised world are confronted with different interlinked challenges: a great imbalance in wealth and poverty, hunger and malnutrition, climate change, biodiversity losses, resource use and other ecological crises, financial crises, excessive military expenditure, public debt in many countries, and high (youth) unemployment.

While resource scarcity does not inevitably lead to violent conflict, it can act as a conflict multiplier by exacerbating existing social tensions. Meanwhile poor resource management can worsen marginalisation, particularly among the poorest social groups. Top-down policies can fail to take local needs into account, large-scale agricultural investment can displace and disrupt small farmers, and hydropower dams, while positive in terms of cleaner energy production, can have a negative impact on both downstream and upstream communities.

International negotiations to establish universal mechanisms to achieve key goals – such as a limit of 2^o C temperature rise – are vital. Nevertheless, action programs can and must be implemented at local, national, regional and international levels.

Four key areas for action can be identified:¹

1. **Universal access to modern energy supplies** in conjunction with the formulation of positive targets for energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies, such as the doubling at least of the proportion of renewable energies in the global energy mix and a significant increase in energy efficiency. Progress should be monitored by an international agency.
2. **Accelerated development of sustainable innovations in the fields of energy efficiency and renewable energies which have global significance**, in other words, those which are relevant to people. The

¹ See declaration of the European Environment Foundation at <http://www.european-environment-foundation.eu/text/56/en/the-convention.html>

technologies in question are generally already in place, for example, energy-efficient buildings and electrical appliances, solar-powered cooling systems, solar-powered desalination facilities for the production of drinking water, efficient public transport systems, zero-emission vehicles, highly efficient and economical renewable energy systems and storage technologies. First and foremost, these are products which are targeted at the needs of poorer regions, such as simple power supplies and water purification systems. The convention of the European Environment Foundation² cites international business competitions such as the "Golden Carrot" program in the US and highly effective market-stimulating feed-in tariffs started in Germany and adopted in more than 60 countries worldwide as positive and particularly successful examples of suitable incentive programmes. The other example is the Climate and Energy Package of the European Union, called "20-20-20"³

3. **Financing of innovation and infrastructure** development by the abolition of environmentally harmful subsidies, the introduction of financial transaction taxes and green taxation such as a CO₂-tax, reductions in military spending including the abolition of nuclear weapons, and an exclusive focus on sustainable innovations and infrastructure in future economic stimulus programmes.
4. **The acknowledgement by the planet's leading corporations** of the environmental and social impacts of their business practices, and their subsequent adoption of the systems and technologies necessary for a sustainable and equitable future.

Militarism is one of the most wasteful and environmentally damaging practices that can be changed in order to reduce ecological damage and liberate resources for environment protection and meeting people's essential needs. Reduction of 10-20% of the global military budget (currently \$1.7 trillion per year) would provide sufficient resources to support this. (See [Disarmament for Sustainable Development](#) – World Future Council).

The abolition of nuclear weapons alone could release 8% of the global military budget to human and environmental needs, and eliminate the

² <http://www.european-environment-foundation.eu/text/56/en/the-convention.html>

³ The EU climate and energy package is a set of binding legislation which aims to ensure the European Union meets its ambitious climate and energy targets for 2020. These targets, known as the "20-20-20" targets, set three key objectives for 2020:

1. A 20% reduction in EU greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels;
2. Raising the share of EU energy consumption produced from renewable resources to 20%;
3. A 20% improvement in the EU's energy efficiency.

existential threat that nuclear weapons pose to humanity, the environment and to future generations, including the threat of catastrophic climatic consequences from nuclear weapons-use (See [Climate-Nuclear Nexus](#)).

In order to address the social injustice and inequality that often act as seeds of violent conflict, equitable resource management should be part of peace building and peacekeeping activities.

Pax Christi International hopes to raise awareness of the complexities surrounding resource management among policy makers at the international level, as well as to explore how international policy can better support local communities to peacefully and equitably manage their natural resources.

Global Day of Action Against Military Spending 2013

This year's Global Day of Action Against Military Spending (GDAMS)⁴ will be held on 15 April 2013. GDAMS brings groups together to create a global movement to pressure governments to reallocate their defence budgets. The latest SIPRI report⁵ estimated the global military spending in 2011 at \$1,738 billion. If reallocated, this amount could address essential human needs and current crises. Member Organisations of Pax Christi International are invited to join this campaign.

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4

<http://www.ipb.org/web/index.php?mostra=content&menu=Military%20vs.%20Social%20Spending&submenu=Global%20Day%20of%20Action%20on%20Military%20Spending>

⁵ <http://www.sipri.org/>