



An Earth System Treaty

An Earth System Treaty is a global accord, negotiated, signed and ratified by all the countries of the Earth, within the UN umbrella. Once declared, it should also be available for voluntary signature by individual citizens, corporations, nongovernment bodies and other groups, organisations and agencies worldwide, so that all may have a chance to affirm their commitment to a whole Planet and the safer future it provides for humans and other life.

The purpose of the Treaty is to provide an international legal framework for protecting and restoring the Earth System so that humans can inhabit it indefinitely. It is a global instrument for achieving human survival and wellbeing and for caring for the planet that affords those benefits. It sets standards, objectives and boundaries that all can follow and abide by.

Several forms of treaty have been proposed, but none so far manages to encompass all ten of the catastrophic threats that constitute the human existential emergency or to integrate their solutions. Most versions refer chiefly to climate change and environmental decline, but overlook questions such as population, food, nuclear weapons, ultratechnology and misinformation. Unless all ten megathreats are included, human survival will remain in doubt.

A truly effective Earth System Treaty will embody:

- A universal ban on nuclear weapons
- An international plan to combat climate change
- An international plan to restore forests, soils, fresh waters, oceans, atmosphere and biodiversity to stable, sustainable levels
- An international agreement to operate a circular economy and end waste
- A plan for a renewable world food supply sufficient for all
- A plan to end chemical pollution in all forms.
- A plan to reduce the human population voluntarily to a sustainable level.
- A global plan to anticipate and prevent pandemic disease.
- A Global Technology Convention to oversee the safe development and introduction of advanced sciences and technologies and minimise harms.
- A World Truth Commission
- An Earth Standard Currency
- All 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The concept behind the treaty is that all signatory nations bind themselves to accepting its standards and promoting them internally and to others. Inviting individuals also to sign the Treaty will call on the enormous power and genius of grassroots humanity to implement it – as well as signalling that individuals, as well as nations and corporations, are also expected to play their part in saving humanity.

Above all, an Earth System Treaty will seek to keep human activity within safe boundaries set by the operation of the Earth System itself, as shown in the following diagram from the Stockholm Resilience Centre. Humans are already in the danger zone for: destruction of the biosphere, climate change, land clearing, and excessive chemical flows such as nitrogen and phosphorus.

Extract from: *How to Fix a Broken Planet*, Cambridge University Press 2023.