

Work in progress!



THE SURVIVAL BILL'S FAQ

Our survival is at risk.

2023 was the hottest year on record. Famines are looming from Sudan to Yemen. The next pandemic could strike anytime, and we aren't prepared. Artificial intelligence could destroy humanity. Israel is massacring Palestinians amid its occupation and apartheid. China and Russia look beyond their borders to impose their brutal repression, from Taiwan to Ukraine. The United States is turning its back on the international rules-based order that it set up after the last world war. The United Nations is in disarray to cope with these threats to our survival.

We can change the tide. For this, our responses must be global, radical and fast.

This Survival Bill is a cry for unity based on the values of equity, well-being and freedom. **It is our promise to you and our political programme for the 2026 UN Secretary-General selection process.** It is the first people-backed, people-made and open political programme for the UN! You can find it here:

<https://www.atlasmovement.org/issues>.

This document explains the Survival Bill in more details, in the form of a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Whoever is selected as the next UN chief will need to rebuild trust in this institution that has failed to deliver on its mandate and is at risk of losing what remains of its relevance. We hope this political programme will help them do just this!

This document is structured around the seven pillars of the Survival Bill: I- Save our Planet; II- End poverty; III- Avert the next pandemic; IV- Control Artificial Intelligence; V- Stop Wars; VI- Resist Dictatorships; VII - Rebuild the United Nations. For each, we answer questions that have come up as well as a set of standard questions:

- What does the Survival Bill say? This is the version of our proposals for a general audience, as on our website.
- What exactly does Atlas propose? This is a more precise formulation of our proposals, for policy wonks.
- What problems are these policies addressing?
- What impact will the proposed policies have? This discusses the impact of our policies assuming that they are adopted; it addresses implementation challenges and unintended consequences.
- How can the proposed policies be adopted? This outlines the institutional process by which our policies can be adopted and discusses any specific issues of political feasibility – bearing in mind that the purpose of Atlas is to create political feasibility.

For questions or comments, please contact info@atlasmovement.org

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SAVE OUR PLANET

Climate change is destroying the Earth, its inhabitants and our future. Over [3 billion people](#) are highly vulnerable, with those living in low-income countries most impacted. It kills hundreds of thousands each year through heat waves, storms, droughts, and floods. The death toll, economic destruction, forced migration flows, and food and water scarcity will only get worse.

Unless we take global, radical climate action. Let's start by **moving away from the fossil fuel economy** that created a climate crisis on steroids. Now.

We won't lie; it will be expensive and require sacrifices. We must pay up before it's too late and pay up equitably. Our transition will be fair.

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Decarbonize Our Economies

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What does the Survival Bill say?

The next Secretary-General must **reduce carbon pollution**, through a global carbon tax.

To avoid the worst effects of climate change, we will need to change our carbon-intensive ways of life and do it quickly and fairly.

To do so, we must use the best economic tool at our disposal: [a global carbon tax](#). Under a carbon tax, authorities charge a fee for every ton of greenhouse gas released into the air. Products that create more carbon pollution become more expensive so people switch to alternatives that pollute less. Carbon taxes have been shown to [work](#) but at the moment only one-quarter of the world's carbon emissions are [covered](#) and most prices are not high enough to meet our [targets](#).

What exactly does Atlas propose?

The Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must adopt an additional Protocol to the Convention to:

- Require all its member-states except Least Developed Countries to adopt a tax on emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide from power plants, heating of buildings, manufacturing, agriculture and transport activities at a rate of at least \$100 per ton of carbon dioxide equivalent.
- Charge a tax at the same rate on the carbon dioxide equivalent embedded in goods imported from countries that fail to implement the carbon tax, except Least Developed Countries.

National governments must accede to and comply with that protocol, and use at least a portion of the carbon tax revenue to compensate consumers, preferably through a universal basic income.

What problems are these policies addressing?

Climate change threatens our survival. We must reduce emissions of greenhouse gas fast to meet the Paris Accord's goal of limiting global warming to well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Fighting climate change involves a cooperation problem: every country has an interest in having global greenhouse gas emissions reduced, but also an incentive to free ride on the global effort. Unilateral adoption of policies to speed the transition to a carbon-neutral economy can harm a country's competitiveness in international trade. It can also increase the cost of living. Both of these problems make fighting climate change politically challenging.

What impact will the proposed policies have?

By increasing the price of carbon-intensive goods and energy, the carbon tax will induce households and companies to reduce energy consumption and invest in energy efficiency and in cleaner manufacturing processes. It will help redirect investments away from fossil fuels toward clean energy sources like wind and solar.

A 2017 report of the High Commission on Carbon Prices suggested that a price in the range of \$40 to \$80 would be needed by 2020, rising to \$50 to \$100 by 2030.¹

A carbon tax will also raise revenue for the government. However, the goal is to reduce carbon emissions, hence the tax base, such that these revenues are not sustainable in the long run.

How much revenue will it raise?

With a back-of-the-envelope calculation, Atlas estimates that the carbon tax can raise about \$3.25 trillion a year worldwide (based on 2021 data).

This calculation is obtained by multiplying the tax rate of \$100 per ton of carbon equivalent by 80% (to take into account that tax authorities will not manage to tax all emissions) and by 96% (to exclude Least Developed Countries) of 43.68 billion tons of carbon-equivalent emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, which is the global total from all activities except land use change and forestry, fugitive emissions, waste, and other fuel combustion.² Existing carbon tax revenue of \$100 billion is then subtracted.

¹ Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition (2017) "Report of the High-Level Commission on Carbon Prices", World Bank. <https://www.uncclean.org/resources/library/report-of-the-high-level-commission-on-carbon-prices/>

² Hannah Ritchie, Pablo Rosado, and Max Roser (2020) "Breakdown of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide emissions by sector". <https://ourworldindata.org/emissions-by-sector>

Won't the carbon tax hurt consumers, especially the poor?

No, not if at least part of the revenue from the tax is redistributed to consumers. The carbon tax can be the linchpin of a universal basic income, which Atlas also calls for (see Atlas' policy to [Lift Everyone Out of Poverty](#)). The combination of the carbon tax, which everyone will pay in proportion to each one's emissions, and the universal basic income, which everyone will receive as a lump sum, is very progressive because richer people tend to emit more greenhouse gases. If all or at least a large share of the carbon tax revenue were spent as universal basic income, a large majority of the population would receive more than it would pay. And everyone would be free to reduce its carbon tax payments by making effort to reduce one's emissions.

It is critical that citizens accept the carbon tax for our survival. Its introduction must be carefully planned, timed with the corresponding introduction of the universal basic income or alternative social protection scheme, and accompanied by a well-orchestrated public information campaign.

Won't the carbon tax hurt industries and induce relocation of economic activities?

No, not if accompanied by a carbon border adjustment mechanism: a tax on the carbon content of goods imported from countries that do not raise the \$100 per ton of carbon equivalent will level the playing field across nations and resolve the free rider problem.

Some fossil fuels-intensive industries will be hurt uniformly across the world and either shrink or reduce their reliance on fossil fuels – that is the point. But other, cleaner industries will replace them, like wind and solar replacing coal, oil and gas.

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

It is only a matter of political will, which Atlas campaigns to create.

Many countries have already adopted such a tax. But coverage is low as too many economic activities are exempted, and the tax rate is too low in most countries.

Keep Fossil Fuels in the Ground

What does the Survival Bill say?

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How can the proposed policies be adopted?

What does the Survival Bill Say?

The next UN Secretary-General must **stop new coal, oil & gas projects** from being developed to ensure our survival.

Long-term climate change has been caused by human activity: mainly from the widespread use of fossil fuels in homes, factories and transport. Fossil fuels account for over 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

We must stop approving new coal, oil and gas projects. And it won't happen magically: it's time to act by banning exploration, **moving away fairly but fast from current exploitation and stopping the destruction of our planet**. This should of course come with a ban on fossil fuels subsidies while compensating low-income households who rely on them!

What exactly does Atlas propose?

The UN General Assembly must adopt a Fossil Fuel Treaty that bans the exploration of and investment in new coal, gas and oil fields.

What problems are these policies addressing?

According to the International Energy Agency, investment in existing and approved oil and gas projects is more than enough in a scenario of falling demand compatible with meeting the 1.5 degree Celsius climate goal.³ It takes twenty years for new exploration licenses to deliver new production. Starting exploration now will therefore necessarily lead to excessive oil and gas production.

What impact will the proposed policies have?

Limiting fossil fuels investment to existing and approved fields will reduce oil and gas supply over time. At constant demand, prices will rise. But demand for fossil fuels must itself be a combination of increased energy efficiency and growth in clean energy

³ International Energy Agency (2025) "The Implications of Oil and Gas Field Decline Rates," <https://www.iea.org/reports/the-implications-of-oil-and-gas-field-decline-rates>

production, which will be incentivized by the rise in fossil fuel prices and by public investment or subsidies. Poor consumers must also be compensated (see [Won't a carbon tax hurt consumers?](#))

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

It is only a matter of political will, which Atlas campaigns to create.

A coalition already exists to support this policy. Read more: <https://fossilfuel treaty.org/>

Support Those on the Front Lines

What does the Survival Bill say?

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How can the proposed policies be adopted?

What does the Survival Bill say?

The next Secretary-General must **ensure the most vulnerable can finance** their response to climate disasters.

The climate transition must not be just fast and radical, but fair to all peoples and nations. Some communities - typically low-income countries - are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis, despite having been those who contributed the least to causing it.

Funding for the **Green Climate Fund** and **Loss and Damage Fund** must be massively increased to **\$1.3 trillion a year**, to support communities in need, to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and rebuild after disasters strike.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

The United Nations must:

1. Fund the Green Climate Fund and Loss and Damage Fund with a combined annual budget rising to \$1.3 trillion by 2035 to support developing countries to adapt and mitigate climate change and compensate them for losses and damages caused by climate change.
2. That fund must be disbursed in the form of:
 - a) Grants for projects of which the cost cannot be recouped by user fees for low-income countries,⁴ and concessional (i.e., low interest) loans for other developing countries;⁵
 - b) Concessional loans for projects of which the cost can be recouped by user fees for low-income countries, and regular loans for other developing countries.
3. That fund must be funded by the regular membership fees of UN member-states.

⁴ For the purpose of this policy, low-income countries are the countries eligible to the International Development Association (the concessional finance arm of the World Bank). That list of countries must itself be expanded to include countries that are over the current income threshold (but still within the World Bank definition of “lower-middle-income-country”) and particularly vulnerable to climate change.

⁵ Excluding China, which has said that it does not need international climate finance.

What problems are these policies addressing?

Climate change is poised to kill millions of people and inflict enormous costs to the global economy in the coming decades. Investing now to mitigate and adapt to climate change will dramatically reduce these costs. But it will itself cost a lot, although the net benefits of adaptation and mitigation are overwhelming.

The Independent High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance estimates that the global projected investment requirement for climate action is around \$6.5 trillion per year by 2030, of which \$2.75 trillion is in advanced economies, \$1.35 trillion in China, and \$2.4 trillion in developing countries other than China, rising to a global \$7.5 trillion per year by 2035, with advanced economies needing \$2.8 trillion, China \$1.4 trillion, and other developing countries \$3.3 trillion.⁶ Of the \$2.4 trillion need for developing countries, they estimate that developing countries themselves will be able to cover \$1.4 trillion, leaving a gap of \$1 trillion a year to be filled by international climate finance by 2030, rising to \$1.3 trillion by 2035. Finally, the \$2.4 trillion need for developing countries other than China by 2030 is broken down into \$1.6 trillion is for the clean energy transition, \$0.25 trillion for adaptation, \$0.25 trillion for loss and damage, \$0.3 trillion for natural capital and sustainable agriculture, and \$0.04 trillion for fostering a just transition (e.g., retraining workers of the fossil fuels industry).

Based on those findings, the United Nations has set a so-called New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for international climate finance, which consists of a firm commitment from advanced countries to provide \$300 billion a year of climate finance to developing countries by 2035, while acknowledging that the real need is \$1.3 trillion a year. (Current spending is just over \$100 billion a year and consists mainly of the relabelling of pre-existing aid.) The \$1 trillion gap between needs and commitment is an obvious first problem. But the NCQG faces three additional problems.

First, the share of what developing countries must shoulder themselves seems to be based solely on what they might be able to pay by raising domestic taxes. Developing countries have not only lower capacity to cope with climate change, but they also tend to be more vulnerable to it. Moreover, they have low responsibility as they contribute a relatively small share of today's global emissions and a very small share of historical emissions. Some argue that advanced countries should shoulder all the costs. That said, the climate investments also enable savings (i.e., cutting investments in fossil fuels, declining spending on fossil fuels consumption) and it is normal to expect developing countries to pay for the energy they consume: for example, it would not be right to ask Americans to pay the full cost of solar plants in Mexico, which would make electricity generation free for Mexicans.

Second, the nature of the funding (grants vs. loans) is not specified. Currently the lion's share of climate finance takes the form of loans, which is problematic because many of the recipient countries are already overindebted – they should not take any more loans. Many climate investments do not generate new revenue with which debt can be repaid, but rather decrease expected losses.

Third, the NCQG is a collective goal, such that the responsibility of each advanced country is unclear. That opens the door to some nations free riding on others.

⁶ Independent High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance (2024) "Raising ambition and accelerating delivery of climate finance". <https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/publication/raising-ambition-and-accelerating-delivery-of-climate-finance/>

Moreover, the list distinguishing the countries that must contribute and the recipients is outdated: it was set in 1992 when the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted, at a time when few countries outside of North America and Western Europe were considered advanced. For example, it is not right that Singapore, with a GDP per capita significantly higher than Britain's and about the same greenhouse gases emissions per capita (though less historical emissions per capita) is not on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's list of countries that must financially support developing countries, simply because Singapore was itself still considered a developing country in 1992.

What impact will the proposed policies have?

Dramatically increasing the budgets of the Green Climate Fund and Loss and Damage Fund will enable developing countries to transition to a carbon neutral economy such as to meet the Paris Accord goal of limiting global warming to well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Advanced countries will need to fund their climate transition on their own.

The proposed policies strike a balance to achieve equity between developing and advanced countries. Almost all loss and damage spending, most spending on adaptation and on just transition, and a large share of spending on natural capital and sustainable agriculture cannot be recouped through user fees (although some projects may generate societal benefits that could theoretically be recouped through taxes). It does therefore not make economic sense to finance them with loans. It would also not be ethical, given the limited ability to pay, greater vulnerability, and lower responsibility of developing countries regarding climate change. By contrast, most spending for the energy transition can be recouped by user fees, and it is normal to expect developing countries to pay for their own energy consumption.

The proposed policies also increase equity among advanced countries by specifying that they must all contribute according to the quantitative formula used for UN membership fees, which is largely based on GDP per capita (see Atlas' policy to [Give the UN the Money It Needs](#)).

Tax-funded grants would thus cover only part of the investments needed for the climate transition. Investment by the private sector is also critical, especially in the energy sector. That is why it is essential to couple these public investment policies with a carbon tax to incentivize the private sector to move away from fossil fuels and embrace clean energy course (see Atlas's policy to [Decarbonize Our Economies](#)).

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

The Green Climate Fund and Loss and Damage Fund are already up and running, but they should be dramatically scaled up – which does raise managerial challenges that ought to be closely monitored and attended to, but are outside the scope of this note. Their loans vs. grants policies must be revised in line with the proposed policies.

Annex 2 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change must be replaced with contributions according to the UN membership fee formula (see Atlas' policy to [Give the UN the Money It Needs](#)).

These changes only require political will, which Atlas campaigns for creating. Striking a fairer balance between advanced and developing countries should help: developing countries should raise their carbon taxes (see Atlas' policy to [Decarbonize Our Economies](#)), but will get more international climate finance and more of it in the form of grants, and all countries will contribute to that finance according to their means. Creating massive new sources of government revenues should help as well (see Atlas' policy to [Give the UN the Money It Needs](#)).

Shield Nature from Human Harm

What does the Survival Bill say?

What does the Survival Bill say?

The next Secretary-General must **protect large areas of our planet from harmful human activities.**

Human activity has been destroying nature, driving species to extinction while also destroying carbon-absorbing nature, such as forests, seagrass and salt marshes. This must end: it is our collective duty to ensure our planet's survival and restore it, everywhere, every day.

To save our planet, the next UN leader should create **Global Safe Zones for Nature Conservation & Restoration** to designate 30% of land and marine areas as protected safe zones, recognized as part of our collective global heritage.

END POVERTY

700 million people - **one human being in ten** - live in extreme poverty. They survive on less than \$1.90 a day, with the COVID-19 pandemic having pushed 150 million more into extreme poverty. People go hungry and lack basic services, such as clean water, sanitation, healthcare and housing.

And all this in a world of plenty. We produce enough food to feed 1.5 times the global population. We have more wealth and resources than ever, although the Few - some countries, companies and individuals - hoard them. We must **redistribute our common goods better** and guarantee safety nets for all.

We won't lie. It won't be easy. Those who benefit will fight back, and there is no perfect formula. However, the endless cycle of wealth-creating more wealth for the few must end, and instead, it must benefit the many.

Lift Every Human Out of Poverty

Raise the Funds to Stop Poverty

Resolve Debt Crises

Shut Down Tax Havens

Create a Global Market for Online Jobs

Lift Every Human Out of Poverty

What does the Survival Bill say?

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How can the proposed policies be adopted?

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What does the Survival Bill say?

The next UN Secretary-General must **set up a global safety net** to eradicate extreme poverty across the planet.

The world economy generates enough financial resources to eradicate poverty, but the political will to redistribute them is still lacking. It is unacceptable.

This global safety net will uplift everyone above the national poverty line, first, focusing on low-income countries. It will consist of a:

1. **A Basic Income**, first available to the most vulnerable in society but aiming to be expanded to all people, and
2. **A guaranteed job scheme** for non-vulnerable people in the absence of a true Universal Basic Income.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

The United Nations General Assembly must:

1. Adopt a resolution calling on all member-states to set up the following social protection schemes (or adapt their existing schemes to meet at least these minimum standards):
 - a. A basic income for the most vulnerable, in line with Resolution 202 of the International Labour Organization:
 - i. Allowance for every child aged 0 to 14, set at 25% of the national poverty line.⁷
 - ii. Allowance for every mother giving birth, set at 100% of the national poverty line and lasting four months.

⁷ This allowance is not set at 100% of the national poverty line because the cost of living for children is lower than that for adults, in part because of economies of scale in consumption (e.g., children do not need their own house).

- iii. Allowance for every severely disabled person, set at 100% of the national poverty line.
 - iv. Allowance for every elderly person aged over 64, set at 100% of the national poverty line.
 - b. A guaranteed job for every able-bodied adult who wants it, paying the national minimum wage or the national poverty line, whichever is higher.
 - c. Progressively expand the basic income to the entire population (universal basic income) as resources allow, starting with youths aged 15 to 24 and with an allowance set at a fraction of the national poverty line.
2. Create a Global Fund for the People that will pay for up to 100% of the benefits described in 1(a) and 1(b) (though set at the extreme poverty line instead of the national poverty line)⁸ for the Least Developed Countries,⁹ with a sliding scale decreasing the percentage paid for as GDP per capita increases.

National governments must comply with those resolutions.

What problems are these policies addressing?

Extreme poverty is an obvious grave problem that afflicts nearly one in ten human beings in the world. It causes hunger, ill health and mental health, productivity losses, and sometimes crimes and other social ills.

Relative poverty (i.e., what is considered poverty in richer countries, usually defined as an income lower than a fraction of median income) and inequality have likewise been linked to all of these social issues.¹⁰

These problems are not new and for decades the international community has strived to tackle them through aid. Most of the aid has been disbursed either through time-bound projects with narrow objectives or as general support to the recipient government's budget conditional to the adoption of certain policies. Both kinds have been donor-driven and often lack ownership by recipient governments, resulting in lack of continuity, inefficiencies and corruption. As a result, although many countries have escaped extreme poverty in recent decades, four dozen countries have failed to take off and remain dependent on aid.

Atlas' approach to aid is to give it straight to people, simply because enjoying basic income security is a human right that should not be negotiable. People can be trusted to make use of their money in the way that best suits them. Life just above the extreme

⁸ The global extreme poverty line is currently \$3 a day at "purchasing power parity" exchange rates using 2021 prices (i.e., what \$3 a day could buy in each country in 2023 based on local prices considering that things tend to be cheaper in poor countries). That extreme poverty line is set at the median of the national poverty lines of low-income countries. The Global Fund will pay benefits at the extreme poverty line instead of the national one to avoid that Least Developed Countries inflate their national poverty lines just to get more transfers from the United Nations. But given that the extreme poverty line is based on low-income countries' national poverty lines, the difference between what these countries will pay to their citizens and what they will get from the United Nations will be small.

⁹ <https://unctad.org/topic/least-developed-countries/list>

¹⁰ See for instance: Oxfam (2014) "Even It Up: Time to End Extreme Inequality". <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/even-it-up-time-to-end-extreme-inequality-333012/>

poverty line is still harsh such that the basic income is unlikely to induce idleness. Corruption and waste can be almost entirely avoided thanks to modern information technologies: biometric identification and digital payments.

The proposed Global Fund for People is meant to complement existing aid, not to replace it. Investing in universal public health systems and universal public education are also essential to sustainably lift people out of poverty. They are also justified as human rights. And while aid's record to spur economic development is inconsistent, it has certainly improved health and educational outcomes.

What impact will the proposed policies have?

The benefits of the basic income and job guarantee are enormous:

- **Ending extreme poverty:** The surest way to end poverty is to put enough money in poor people's pockets to lift them above the poverty line. Ending extreme poverty means better nourished, healthier (including mental health), more productive, happier human beings.
- **Stronger economies:** The amounts of cash that the Global Fund will inject into national economies will be very substantial for low-income countries. As poor people tend to buy mostly locally made goods, it will stimulate demand for local production. Local supply will increase, too, as income security will enable people to save more and take more risk to start new business activities. Stronger low-income economies will in turn buy more from richer countries, spreading prosperity.
- **A care economy and more public services:** Local governments will be able to create millions of jobs to provide services, such as care for children, disabled and elderly people, cleaning up cities and nurturing the natural environment, increasing security, and so on. A buoyant care economy will liberate women and unleash their productivity.
- **Better governance:** The basic income and job guarantee will constitute a tangible bond between citizens and their government and inspire civic engagement (in the context of rural areas of some Least Developed Countries, where some people have never encountered a civil servant). The selection of services to be provided by the job guarantee can be made through direct democracy processes at local level (i.e., participatory budgeting).
- **A data revolution:** The biometric identification and digital payments infrastructure set up to disburse the benefits will have co-benefits, including in running elections, expanding the tax base (shrinking the informal economy), fighting tax fraud, fraud in other social protection schemes and other crimes, achieving universal access to basic financial services, better health data management and so on.

Counter-arguments to a universal basic income usually focus on its cost and on an objection to the principle of paying people for nothing. Replacing the universal basic income with a job guarantee for able-bodied adults at the global level addresses both those concerns. At the national level, there is enough wealth in rich countries to start moving toward a true universal basic income.

There are also practical objections. Social protection schemes are plagued by false exclusions (eligible people don't get benefits) and false inclusions (ineligible ones do)

and corruption. Since the proposed benefits are universal, differentiated only on the basis of the easily observable factors of age, disability or pregnancy status, exclusions and false inclusions are largely moot. As to corruption, the Global Fund will require and assist governments to set up 21st century digital civil registries with biometric identification. The registries will be kept up to date with annual identification controls, which people will be incentivised to do to keep their benefits. People will be issued identity cards that are also debit cards to which governments will deposit benefits directly.

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

It is only a matter of political will, and Atlas campaigns to create it.

How much will it cost and where will the money come from?

Financing the Global Fund for People by a global billionaires' tax is likely to be very popular (see Atlas' policy to [Raise the Funds to Stop Poverty](#)). Atlas estimates the cost of the basic income for Least Developed Countries at \$238 billion a year – almost exactly the estimated revenue of the 3% billionaires' tax of \$233 billion. The job guarantee in Least Developed Countries will cost an additional estimated \$97 billion a year, which will be funded by the regular UN budget (see Atlas' policy to [Give the UN the Money It Needs](#)).

Those cost estimates are back-of-the-envelope calculations based on World Bank data for the year 2023. The basic income estimate is the population of Least Developed Countries in the relevant age range multiplied by \$3 (or \$0.75 for children) a day multiplied by 365 days a year (or 122 days for the maternity benefit). The proportion of disabled people is assumed to be 4%. Administrative costs are assumed to be only 1% of the total: although up front investments in the biometric identification and digital payment systems will be substantial, they will be dwarfed by the sheer scale of the programme and enable very low operating costs. The cost estimate for the job guarantee is based on the working age population of Least Developed Countries multiplied by \$3 a day times 365 days, multiplied again by the income gap fraction, which is the shortfall in income or consumption from the extreme poverty line \$3.00 (counting the nonpoor as having zero shortfall) expressed as a percentage of the poverty line. In other words, the estimates assumes that all working age people who currently earn less than the extreme poverty line will take a job under the job guarantee for a number of hours just sufficient to bring their total income to the extreme poverty line, but not more. Administrative costs for the job guarantee is assumed to be a 20% mark up, to cover the cost of supervisory staff, training, capital equipment and non-staff operating costs of delivering the public services.

These estimates assume that the Global Fund will cover 100% of the benefits for Least Developed Countries and 0% for other countries. In reality, that would create a huge and debilitating threshold effect whereby countries that graduate from Least Developed Country status would suddenly be cut off from transfers worth several points of GDP, which would plunge them back into Least Developed Country status and keep them there. To avoid that, the Global Fund should cover only a fraction of the total cost of the programme for all but the handful of poorest countries, and that fraction should gradually decrease as GDP per capita increases. That will generate savings for the Global Fund, which should use them to continue paying an (ever decreasing) fraction of the cost of the benefits for some time after a country graduates from Least Developed

Country status (and, for equity reasons, also pay for a fraction of the benefits of countries above but close to the Least Developed Country GDP per capita threshold at the time the programme is launched). That also means that the governments of Least Developed Countries will have to make an effort to fund the portion of the benefits not covered by the Global Fund, which will be good to induce national ownership of the programme and which could be done through a combination of redirecting budgets from duplicative existing social protection schemes and other budget lines as well as increased domestic tax revenue, notably those enabled by the digital revolution introduced by the programme. Governments will face a very powerful incentive to prioritize this programme, as a failure to deliver the matching fund will result in the loss of the UN transfers worth several points of GDP.

Raise Funds to Stop Poverty

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What does the Survival Bill say?

The next UN Secretary-General must **gather the needed resources** to fight poverty.

Just a [few](#) dozen billionaires own as much as half of humanity, all the while people struggle to make [ends meet](#). Nothing justifies that. Lifting everyone out of poverty requires global solidarity.

The United Nations must raise a **billionaires' tax** of 3% of their wealth as well as a financial transaction tax to fund the global safety net for low-income countries. These could be the first taxes levied by the UN.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

The UN General Assembly must adopt a resolution calling on the world's billionaires to contribute 3% of their wealth (net of debt) above one billion US dollars to the United Nations. The UN Secretariat must monitor their compliance.

National governments must:

1. Adopt national legislations to enforce the UN billionaires' tax on their nationals and on individuals residing or having business activities on their territories.
2. Raise wealth taxes on multi-millionaires, and possibly top up the UN billionaires' tax with higher tax rates, to shore up their own budgets, with rates at their discretion.
3. Adopt a financial transaction tax as its first own source of revenue.

What problems are these policies addressing?

As argued throughout this Survival Bill, the world is facing a number of threats to our very survival. Dealing with these threats requires massive public investments at both global and national levels. We should start with taking money from where it is: in the hands of very rich people.

We live in a world of obscene inequality where a few dozens of billionaires own as much wealth as half of humanity. Such extreme inequality cannot be justified under any moral value system (except libertarianism).¹¹ A high degree of inequality has also been linked to all kinds of social ills, from poor health to crime.¹²

While Atlas does not support earmarking (i.e., legally directing specific revenue streams to specific spending streams), the billionaires' tax can be symbolically and politically tied to the basic income and job guarantees (see Atlas' policy to [Lift Every Human Out of Poverty](#)). It is Robin Hood on steroids: taking money from the world's very richest and putting it in the pockets of the world's very poorest.

Another problem addressed by this policy is the United Nations' need for own resources. The United Nations does not have legal authority to raise taxes, which stunts its potential growth (see Atlas' policy to [Give the UN the Money It Needs](#)). The billionaires' tax is an innovative tool to overcome that barrier (see [How can the proposed policies be adopted?](#)).

What impact will the proposed policies have?

The wealth taxes will meet part of the overall financing needs to implement the Survival Bill (see Atlas' policy to [Give the UN the Money It Needs](#)).

They will also curb the excessive and growing concentration of wealth that is skewing our economies and corrupting our politics.¹³

In addition to raise additional revenue to balance the Survival Bill's budget (see Atlas' policy to [Give the UN the Money It Needs](#)), the financial transaction tax will reduce speculative trading. The rate must however be kept low to avoid disrupting market liquidity.

How much revenue will the wealth taxes raise?

Relying on the wealth tax simulator of the World Income Database project,¹⁴ Atlas estimates that a global tax on individuals' wealth above \$1 billion will raise \$233 billion a year. That is assuming 10% of evasion and 10% of depreciation. It

¹¹ Jacobs, Didier (2015) "Extreme wealth is not merited", Oxfam Discussion Papers. https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/dp-extreme-wealth-is-not-merited-241115-en.pdf

¹² Pickett, Kate and Richard Wilkinson (2009) "The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone", Penguin.

¹³ Oxfam (2014) "Even It Up". Oxfam Campaign Report. <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/even-it-up-time-to-end-extreme-inequality-333012/>

¹⁴ <https://wid.world/world-wealth-tax-simulator/>

corresponds to the cost of the basic income in Least Developed Countries: \$238 billion a year (see Atlas' policy to [Lift Every Human Out of Poverty](#)).

The revenue raised by the national taxes on multi-millionaires will of course depend on the tax rates, which are left to the discretion of national Atlas chapters to choose depending on their context. For purely illustrative purposes, a progressive tax starting at 1% on wealth over \$5 million and climbing to 2% for wealth above \$50 million, with a 1% top up of the UN billionaires' tax for wealth above \$50 billion (such that wealth between \$1 billion and \$50 billion would be taxed at 3% by the UN, and wealth above \$50 billion would be taxed at a total 4%, including 3% for the UN and 1% for national governments) would raise \$897 billion a year for national governments (in addition to the UN revenue), again assuming a 10% evasion rate and 10% depreciation rate.

Won't wealth taxes harm the economy?

Proponents of meritocracy claim that extreme wealth inequality reflects effort, talent and risk-taking. Taxing wealth would therefore harm the economy. However, while effort should certainly be compensated to some extent, no one requires a billion-dollar reward to exert his or her best effort (indeed, millions of people are working 70-hour weeks for a pittance). As to talent, it is genetically and socially inherited: either you have it, or you don't, regardless of monetary rewards. (Although raw talent must usually be nurtured through hard work to be successful, that brings us back to effort.) In practice, top athletes, artists and professionals rarely amass more than \$50 million in wealth through their personal work alone: to become extremely rich, you need to create a company and have many people work for you.

That brings us to risk taking. Wealth taxes are less likely to disincentivize high-risk, high-return investments than taxes on capital income and capital gains. A low rate of 1% to 3% will merely capture the risk-free real return on capital. But that alone could disincentivize savings and hence stunt economic growth. That is true at low levels of wealth. However, the consumption and saving decisions of extremely rich people (who can gain or lose billions of dollars in a day just because of normal stock exchange variations) are most likely very insensitive to changes in their wealth and hence to wealth taxes. Above a certain amount of wealth, money stops being a constraint on your personal consumption. At very high levels of wealth (billionaires), confiscatory rates well above the historical real of return on capital are unlikely to harm the economy. Because net wealth taxes have rarely been tried, scant data exist to back up – or reject – this hypothesis, but it is a very reasonable one. It is important to adopt a progressive rate scale, starting at a low rate for relatively low levels of net wealth, and monitor the impact of the tax on the economy.

A special case to be addressed are people who start up very successful companies. In the early years, the companies might not generate profits and hence be unable to distribute dividends, but nevertheless be valued billions because of the expectation of future profits. The owner may then face a high tax bill without having the cash to pay it. That could substantially discourage high-risk entrepreneurship. A special provision should be added to the wealth tax to allow deferred payment for a limited time (say, ten years) for the owners of new companies, with the possibility of adjusting the amount retroactively in case the company loses value during that period. Beyond that period, either the company generates profits with which the owner can pay the tax, or the owner could sell shares or borrow money with shares as collateral.

Read more: Jacobs, Didier (2017) “The case for a billionaire tax”, *Oxfam*.
<https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/case-billionaire-tax#>

Won't rich people evade or avoid the wealth taxes?

Wealth taxes are susceptible to several problems that can severely decrease their revenue and undermine their legitimacy. Fortunately, all these problems have straightforward solutions.

A first problem is that rich people can move to a country that would not raise the wealth tax (a tax haven). The solution is for countries that do raise wealth taxes to apply it to their citizens, regardless of their residence. Income taxes are usually raised on residents. The United States is an exception, as it taxes the income of both its residents and citizens living abroad. All countries could emulate that precedent when it comes to the wealth tax, while giving a tax credit for wealth taxes collected by the country of residence. That can be complemented by an exit tax for citizens renouncing their nationality (something that also already exists in some jurisdiction): a one-time wealth tax at a rate sufficiently high to dissuade taxpayers from renouncing their nationality.

A second problem is that rich people can hide their money in tax havens. That is tax evasion, which is already illegal and can get you in jail. International agreements have already been adopted and implemented in the past twenty years to exchange information among national tax authorities to enforce the law. While loopholes subsist, rules can be further tightened. More importantly, cultural norms among rich people have been changing in the past couple of decades: it is no longer cool to evade taxes internationally and few lawyers and accountants (who are indispensable to design tax evasion schemes) are now willing to enable it. Disgruntled employees of law firms regularly leak information to investigative journalists (e.g., the “Panama Papers”), which creates a random risk of being caught that few multi-millionaires are ready to countenance. To accelerate that shift in cultural norms, penalties for tax fraud should be increased, including tougher penalties on aiding and abetting lawyers and accountants. The subsistence of some degree of tax fraud will always subsist, but it's not because some people get away with murder that you should depanelize it.

A third problem is tax avoidance. Rich people can hire lawyers and accountants who will optimize (i.e., minimize) their taxes. That is not breaking the law, but taking advantage of the loopholes in the law. It is indeed pervasive, and it is the main reason why politicians are reluctant to rely more on wealth taxes. The solution is not to introduce loopholes in the law in the first place. The few wealth taxes that exist or that were tried in the past were ill-designed as they sought to shield some forms of wealth (e.g., the taxpayer's primary residence, farms, stakes in sole proprietary businesses) from the tax, which allowed lawyers and accountants to artificially shift wealth to these tax-exempted assets. A good wealth tax does not have any exemption at all, whether on the type of assets or on the form of ownership (e.g., trusts). Only debts must be subtracted from total wealth. However, the wealth tax can apply only to total net wealth above a certain threshold, e.g., \$5 million. That will automatically exclude the vast majority of the population and protect the categories of people whom politicians usually want to exempt from wealth taxes, like farmers: the net wealth of most farmers in the United States is less than \$5 million; and those whose net wealth is above that are capitalists with many farm workers working for them and do not need to be shielded from a tax at a modest rate.

A fourth problem is that tax authorities cannot easily assess some forms of wealth. Most wealth is held in traded assets like real estate, bank and investment accounts, of which the value is readily observable in the marketplace. But tax authorities have a harder time to check the value of non-traded assets: primarily privately owned businesses and secondarily art collections. Taxpayers are therefore prone to under-declare their value to avoid tax. The solution is for wealth taxes to include a mechanism through which the tax is retroactively adjusted (with interests) whenever such assets are eventually traded.

How much revenue will the Financial Transaction Tax raise?

Atlas estimates that a global financial transaction tax could raise \$285 billion a year. That is based on an estimate of €57 billion that the European Commission did for an EU financial transaction tax in 2011,¹⁵ multiplied by 3.5 to scale it to all high-income countries, multiplied by 1.32 to account for Euro inflation between 2011 and 2023, and by 1.0824 to convert it to US dollars at 2023 exchange rate.

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

At national level, the adoption of a robust wealth tax is only a matter of political will, and Atlas will campaign to create it.

Matters are more complicated for the United Nations because it does not have the legal authority to raise taxes. Atlas campaigns to amend the UN Charter to change that (see Atlas' policy to [Give the UN the Money It Needs](#)). But it is a heavier lift politically. To go around that challenge, we propose the following way to smoothly give the United Nations taxation power through a series of incremental steps.

First, the UN General Assembly should adopt a resolution at a simple majority of member-states calling on the world's billionaires to contribute 3% of their wealth to the United Nations. Technically, that would be a voluntary contribution, not a tax. The United Nations already accepts philanthropic funding. Billionaires could simply decline to pay. However, the resolution would create a moral obligation for them to pay, and their failure to pay would be known. That distinguishes billionaires from other taxpayers (and explains why this strategy cannot be applied to multi-millionaires): it is difficult to become billionaires under the radar screen of public scrutiny. Forbes magazine publishes a global list of billionaires with an estimate of their wealth and updates it annually by scouring public financial records including but not limited to stock exchanges. A second step would be for the United Nations Secretariat to emulate such research, and publicly send requests of contributions with specific amounts to specific individuals believed to be billionaires based on such records. The individuals in question could always confidentially provide the United Nations with non-public information to correct any inaccuracies in the assessed contribution. A third step would be mass media campaigns to nudge or shame billionaires into paying. Led by the United Nations, such campaigns would probably be supported by many advocacy organizations. The fortunes of many billionaires rest on consumer brands that could be tarnished if they don't comply, which could prompt some billionaires to pay. In time, it could become a strong social norm prompting most billionaires to pay. A fourth step

¹⁵ European Commission (2011) "Financial Transaction Tax: Making the financial sector pay its fair share". https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_11_1085

would be for a national government to adopt a law enforcing the UN resolution on all billionaires who are their citizens or residents or who own business operations on their territory. UN General Assembly resolutions are indeed “soft law”: UN member-states are expected to comply with them even if they don’t have a legal obligation to do so. Once translated into national law, the UN billionaires’ tax would become a real tax, mandated by sovereign states but collected by the United Nations. A fifth and final steps would be for many more countries to emulate the first one, which could eventually widen the UN tax collection power to all billionaires.

To adopt a global financial transaction tax levied by the United Nations, the UN Charter will need to be amended, which requires a two thirds majority of member-states including the five permanent members of the Security Council (see Atlas’ policy [Give the UN the Money it Needs](#)). Short of that, the tax would need to be levied by national governments and the revenue transferred to the United Nations.

Resolve Debt Crises

What does the Survival Bill say?

What exactly does Atlas propose?

What problems are these policies addressing?

What impact will the proposed policies have?

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

What does the Survival Bill say?

The next UN Secretary-General must **shield people from excessive and doomed austerity measures.**

Due to historical injustices, bad governance and dire economic downturns, governments sometimes take on more debt than they can handle. They then impose austerity measures, such as cutting public services and raising taxes, to repay loans to international creditors like the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Because of the lack of an international legal process to forgive public debts, governments tend to press too much austerity on their people for too long, past the breaking point of social unrest.

Just as companies can use national courts to manage their way out of bankruptcy equitably, the UN must **establish a legal system that allows for countries to resolve debt crises** in an orderly and equitable way.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

The UN General Assembly must adopt a UN Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt that must set a legally binding process to restructure sovereign debts based on debt sustainability analyses developed independently from both debtor and creditors. That Convention could include additional protocols to:

- Set principles of responsible borrowing and lending;
- Set rules for sovereign debt transparency, including a global registry;
- Make odious debts (i.e., debt contracted through an unlawful process) unenforceable;
- Set rules to automatically and temporarily suspend debt service in case of catastrophic events;
- Set rules for private credit rating agencies.

What problems are these policies addressing?

When a company becomes insolvent, it can file for bankruptcy and benefit from an orderly debt restructuring process supervised by a court. There is no equivalent legally binding process for sovereign debt. When a government defaults on its debt, it

negotiates a debt restructuring with its creditors in the context of a legal grey zone. On the one hand, creditors can take the government to court in New York or London, where most foreign sovereign debts are contracted, which will rule that the government must pay back the debt in full. On the other hand, once they win such a court case, it is difficult for creditors to actually obtain repayment by seizing assets, as governments typically own few commercial assets abroad (and non-commercial assets like embassy buildings are immune from seizure). Most creditors are therefore willing to negotiate a partial debt reduction in order to avoid the lengthy court battle and uncertain asset recovery process. But some creditors known as “vulture funds” sometimes take advantage of the situation, buying sovereign debt on the secondary market at a deep discount when the debtor is already in trouble, and seeking to be repaid at the full face value through the court process. A single vulture fund can put an entire debt restructuring process on hold as other creditors typically do not want to be treated less favourably.

Another challenge is that there is no clear definition of insolvency for sovereign debt. For the private sector, in the worst case the judge can decide to liquidate the company, i.e., auction off all its assets. That provides a floor for the value of the company. Governments cannot be liquidated. Restructuring processes for sovereign debt therefore rely on debt sustainability analyses, which assess how much money governments can extract from their populations through higher taxes and lower public services before they break down in civil unrest. Currently such analyses are carried out by the International Monetary Fund, which is controlled by creditor governments and is itself a creditor.

That creditor bias and the lack of an orderly sovereign bankruptcy process results in too little debt relief being conceded too slowly and too late. That is very costly for debtor countries, which are left in economic limbo for years with deep austerity measures and little foreign investment. Delays and uncertainty are also bad for creditors, as time is money for bond investors and uncertainty calls for higher risk premiums.

Additional protocols to the convention could tackle more specific problems with sovereign debt, such as the lack of transparency (not all sovereign debt contracts being disclosed) and accountability (given that corrupt government officials sometimes contract debt without due legal process).

Read more: Eurodad (2025) “UN Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt: Building a New Architecture for Economic Justice”.

https://www.eurodad.org/un_framework_convention_on_sovereign_debt

What impact will the proposed policies have?

An orderly sovereign debt bankruptcy process that is legally binding on all creditors and debtors would speed up debt restructurings and make their outcomes more predictable, which would be beneficial to debtors and creditors alike.

The creditor bias would be eliminated by the United Nations appointing independent arbitrators, along the model of the World Trade Organization’s Dispute Settlement Body. Those arbitrators would be in charge of commissioning the debt sustainability analyses. The end of the creditor bias would likely result in debt restructurings more favourable to debtors. That could in turn incite creditors to demand higher risk premia and lend less. Some debtor countries could lose access to global financial markets. That is not

necessarily a bad thing: the current debt crisis underscores that some low and middle-income countries have been borrowing too much. Most low-income countries should instead rely on official lending by rich governments and multilateral development banks, offered at concessional interest rates. By contrast, middle-income countries with good macroeconomic management and sound institutions should not be affected. The UN Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt will incite creditors to be more discerning and debtors to be more diligent, both of which are welcome.

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

The UN General Assembly can adopt a Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt at a simple majority of its member-states. The convention is then legally binding only on the states that choose to ratify it. Although debtor countries have enough votes to push for such convention over the objections of creditor countries, it would not be very useful as long as sovereign debt contracts are written under the laws of the latter. And while debtor countries could insist on writing debt contracts under their own laws (which is increasingly done), creditors are unlikely to accept lending as much because they would face a significantly higher risk of now being repaid. It is therefore important for the convention to be adopted by a critical mass of creditor countries.

Shut Down Tax Havens

What does the Survival Bill say?

What exactly does Atlas propose?

What problems are these policies addressing?

What impact will the proposed policies have?

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

What does the Survival Bill say?

The next UN Secretary-General must **close loopholes allowing multinationals and wealthy individuals to avoid taxes.**

Countries are deprived of much-needed corporate and income tax revenues due to tax havens. While the international community has taken some measures in recent years (including a global minimum corporate tax of 15%), high-income countries are dragging their feet to let the United Nations take on the problem earnestly.

It is fundamental to adopt **stronger rules against international tax evasion, increase the minimum corporate tax rate**, and switch to a system where multinationals are taxed fairly and those taxes are redistributed equitably to the countries where business activities take place.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

The UN General Assembly must adopt a protocol to the UN Framework Convention for International Tax Cooperation (aka UN Tax Treaty) to distribute taxing rights over multinational corporations' global profits based on their sales in each country.

What problems are these policies addressing?

Multinational corporations pay lower effective tax rates than domestic businesses or individuals for two reasons. Tax avoidance (or "tax optimization") is a set of practices whereby lawyers and accountants artificially shift multinational corporations' taxable profits from high to low tax jurisdictions in order to minimize their global tax bill. Tax avoidance is enabled by the foundational principle of international tax law according to which each country gets to tax the subsidiaries of multinational corporations based on its territory and international transactions among the subsidiaries of a same multinational group are assumed to be made at "arms length," i.e., on market terms as if the subsidiaries were not related. For example, a multinational corporation would transfer its intellectual property to a subsidiary located in a tax haven, and all its other subsidiaries around the world would pay a licensing fee to that subsidiary to use that intellectual property. That would substantially decrease the profits of subsidiaries around the world (as intellectual property often account for a large part of a product's value), and hence reduce their tax liabilities, while the one subsidiary owning the

intellectual property would make super profits that would go untaxed because it is located in a tax haven.

Tax competition is the trend followed by governments to reduce statutory tax rates or create tax exemptions in order to attract multinational corporations' business. Some countries are notorious tax havens and offer zero rates for all or large segments of multinational corporations' profits. But most governments also participate in tax competition by reducing their rates over time and offering fiscal niches that are then exploited through tax avoidance, in a self-defeating race to the bottom.

What impact will the proposed policies have?

The arms-length principle must be overthrown and multinational corporations must be taxed as single, global entities. The global taxable profits of multinational corporations must be defined through a multilateral agreement and apportioned to each country where they do business according to a formula using easily observable variables like the distribution of the corporations' sales, number of employees or employee compensation, or physical assets across countries. While accounting tricks can shift profits across borders, employees, physical assets and sales can be physically located. That would end tax avoidance.

Using sales as the sole factor for formulary apportionment of global profits would also end tax competition. Apportionment by employees or physical assets would induce multinational corporations to shift production to low-tax jurisdictions, prompting governments all over the world to continue lowering their tax rates. By contrast, multinational corporations will always sell their wares where their customers live.

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

The UN General Assembly launched negotiations on the UN Tax Treaty in 2024, and these negotiations are expected to last several years before the Treaty is formally adopted and then ratified by a critical mass of countries. A protocol to that treaty instituting unitary taxation of multinational corporations based on the sales factor can then also be adopted by a simple majority of the UN General Assembly and become binding on the countries that ratify it.

Unitary taxation based on the sales factor can also be adopted unilaterally by any single country. That is what many US states have done with their state income taxes. National governments shy away from it because it is a big change and they could face resistance from other countries in the renegotiations of their existing tax treaties, which could penalize their multinational corporations' foreign businesses. Multilateral action is also preferable to avoid the red tape that multinational corporations would have to deal with if faced with multiple versions of unitary taxation coexisting with the current system in some countries.

Create a Global Market for Online Jobs

What does the Survival Bill say?

What does the Survival Bill say?

The UN Secretary-General must **stop the exploitation of remote online work.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has normalised remote working for white-collar workers worldwide. We all know that, when working remotely, there is no difference whether your home is around the block from the office or across the world. But two workers doing the same tasks for the same company can earn very different salaries in very different conditions depending on the country they are based in. That is due in part to national legal barriers and gives room for workers' unfair treatment.

Breaking down such barriers will enable skilled workers in low-income countries to **access more job opportunities, take home higher pay, and boost their national economies.**

AVERT THE NEXT PANDEMIC

Pandemics have the potential to destroy our civilisation. The havoc caused by COVID-19 is fresh in our collective memory. It killed over [7 million](#) people worldwide, and [65 million](#) are still struggling with long-COVID. The pandemic shut down our economies, weakened our social structures and led to an epidemic of loneliness.

It didn't have to be the case. COVID-19 wasn't just destructive because of the virus but because of our selfish responses. Many deaths were preventable, but we failed to share vaccines globally. We must prepare and **ensure that medicines, technology, and know-how are shared equitably** during an emergency.

We won't lie. There will be another pandemic; it's just a matter of time. We need to put in place the infrastructure capable of curtailing it and avoiding health apartheid.

[End Health Apartheid](#)

[Support People in Emergencies, Everywhere](#)

End Health Apartheid

What does the Survival Bill say?

What does the Survival Bill say?

The next UN Secretary-General must improve the **Pandemic Treaty to ensure global health threats are swiftly and equitably dealt with.**

Past pandemics have demonstrated how wealthy nations effectively monopolize the global vaccine supply. This has led to avoidable deaths, not least during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This can be stopped from happening again through a Pandemic Treaty that can: increase medicines **manufacturing capacity** globally, include all countries in **preparedness efforts** and **share intellectual property rights, technology, and know-how** during emergencies. While the World Health Assembly adopted the Pandemic treaty in 2025, it falls short of doing this, and must be built upon.

Support People in Emergencies, Everywhere

What does the Survival Bill say?

What does the Survival Bill say?

The next UN Secretary-General must co-create a Universal Emergency Health Service to **provide quality, online healthcare to every person in case of pandemics.**

Covid-19 highlighted the need for a coordinated international response to health crises. Existing national health systems, especially in low-income countries, often struggle to cope with the surge in demand, leading to unnecessary suffering and loss of life.

The **Universal Emergency Health Service** will provide reliable online counseling from doctors and health information to people affected by emergencies. Along with the World Health Organization, the next UN leader must make the Universal Emergency Health Service one of the core services provided by the agency.

CONTROL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence is already impacting every aspect of our lives. From May to December 2023, 1,000% more websites have posted AI-created fake articles, influencing elections and trust. Governments already use the technology to censor, surveil and discriminate. But it doesn't stop there. 40% of jobs are at risk of being replaced by artificial intelligence.

Artificial intelligence is not like other technologies. Its potential is infinite, both in the good and the bad. However, just like other technologies that know no borders, it **must be regulated globally to be curtailed**. There is no other way than having international AI treaties, regulations, and law enforcement mechanisms.

We won't lie. Multinational corporations will seek loopholes as lack of regulation equals more opportunities to squeeze profits out of our declining privacy, freedom, choices, and ultimately well-being. But we will not give up: AI must be regulated for its risks to be tamed and its benefits to be shared equitably.

[Give People Power over Artificial Intelligence](#)

[Stop Dangerous Artificial Intelligence](#)

[Global Control under the United Nations](#)

[Artificial Intelligence Profits for All, Not Just the Few](#)

Give People Power over Artificial Intelligence

What does the Survival Bill say?

What does the Survival Bill say?

The next UN Secretary-General must establish a **Citizens' Assembly dedicated to regulating AI for the benefit of humanity**.

Currently, the [UN's approach](#) to AI involves "experts," selected NGOs, countries, and big tech companies, who sit on panels and agencies to determine how this technology should be managed. Unfortunately, the interests of the global population are often overlooked. This must change.

The Citizens' Assembly, informed by experts, **will draft a Treaty to regulate AI globally**, setting forth principles that all countries and companies must adhere to when deploying AI systems. The next UNSG must then push this Treaty to be adopted and implemented worldwide.

Stop Dangerous Artificial Intelligence

[What does the Survival Bill say?](#)

[What exactly does Atlas propose?](#)

[What problems are these policies addressing?](#)

[What impact will the proposed policies have?](#)

[How can the proposed policies be adopted?](#)

What does the Survival Bill say?

In the short term, the next UN Secretary-General must implement a **temporary ban on research and development of superintelligence** beyond current capabilities. This must be the case until an AI governance framework is created and establish a rigorous multilateral verification regime.

AI could soon surpass human intelligence, posing existential threats due to loss of human control, value misalignment, and malicious use. To give humanity a chance at survival, we need breathing room in the short term. It is essential to ensure that dangerous AI capabilities emerging are thoroughly tested and controlled in the interest of all nations and people.

This temporary ban will **impact only a handful of companies** developing the most advanced models. It will not affect the development of AI tools for people and businesses within current capabilities, which are poised to greatly improve our lives. Additionally, the next UN Secretary-General must propose a permanent ban on using AIs to improve other AIs, as this positive feedback loop rapidly makes human oversight impossible.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

The next UN Secretary-General must urge for a temporary ban on research and development of superintelligence beyond current capabilities and establish a rigorous multilateral verification regime. This must include:

- Banning research and development on AI beyond the current maximum compute (10e25 or 10e26 [FLOPS](#)) and capability thresholds set by an ad hoc UN commission until an AI governance framework is established.
- Permanently prohibiting the use of AI to develop AI.

All member states, particularly the United States and China, which lead the field, must ratify and implement this treaty.

What problems are these policies addressing?

While AI holds great promise, it is also one of the most urgent threats to human survival. Its rapid and unregulated development challenges human primacy on Earth.

Current AI systems already outperform individual experts across various domains and exhibits signs¹⁶ of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). These systems may soon surpass the collective intelligence of humanity,¹⁷ reaching the threshold of Artificial Superintelligence (ASI). This creates a non-trivial risk of human extinction due to:

- Loss of human agency: A few people design AI systems that end up controlling the behavior of entire societies. AI tools increasingly manage complex, interdependent systems without human oversight. Just as individuals follow GPS directions without knowing what lies ahead, decision-makers may increasingly rely on AI for economic or military strategies, surrendering control.
- Misaligned AI: While humans can encode values into AI, critical nuances are often omitted, especially as values evolve across cultures and time. History shows that when isolated societies encounter modernity, unintended disruptions occur. Similarly, the translation of human values into AI may be flawed, leading to catastrophic outcomes.
- Malicious actors: AI can be exploited by malevolent forces to dominate humanity. In a landscape where corporations and superpowers pursue AI supremacy, greed and power struggles may drive reckless advancements, escalating existential risks.

Major powers and corporations are racing to develop frontier AI systems, while institutions and social norms evolve more slowly. If superintelligence emerges before robust governance is established, the consequences could be apocalyptic. We must “pause” the pursuit of superintelligence to have time to create global regulations (see Atlas’ policies [Global Control under the United Nations](#) and [Artificial Intelligence Profits for All, Not Just a Few](#)).

What impact will the proposed policies have?

A temporary halt in superintelligence research would buy crucial time, but enforcement is challenging. To be effective, it must include two additional measures:

Compute and capability thresholds: A UN commission must define limits on AI computing power, capping it at the levels used in today’s cutting-edge models like ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini or DeepSeek (e.g., 10e25 or 10e26 FLOPs). This restriction would initially impact only a handful of companies while leaving the broader economy and AI safety research unaffected. However, as technology advances and AI becomes more efficient, these thresholds will require regular re-evaluation.

Banning AI from developing AI: Preventing AI from autonomously improving itself is critical. If AI surpasses human engineers in AI development, it could trigger a runaway “technological singularity,” where AI irreversibly gains control over its own very rapid evolution.

¹⁶ Bubeck, Sébastien, et al. "Sparks of artificial general intelligence: Early experiments with gpt-4." 22 Mar. 2023, <https://arxiv.org/abs/2303.12712>

¹⁷ Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. *International Scientific Report on the Safety of Advanced AI: Interim Report*. DSIT Research Paper Series No. 2024/009, 2024, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-scientific-report-on-the-safety-of-advanced-ai-interim-report>

To ensure compliance, the UN must establish a verification regime, including:

- Satellite surveillance to detect heat signatures from large computing centers.
- On-site inspections of major AI facilities by international teams.
- Chip export controls that require nations to regulate and track advanced AI chips, ensuring traceability and restricting their use via licensing.
- A global registry mandating the disclosure of large-scale AI training runs.

These measures would serve as a global safeguard against uncontrolled superintelligence, allowing safe AI research to continue while stronger governance frameworks are developed.

Importantly, this temporary ban applies only to cutting-edge AI research, affecting a limited number of companies. All other businesses can continue applying AI within the defined computational limits, ensuring economic benefits and innovation remain intact.

Read more: Andrea Miotti, Tolga Bilge, Dave Kasten and James Newport (April 2025) “A Narrow Path: How to Secure Our Future.” https://pdf.narrowpath.co/A_Narrow_Path.pdf

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

The AI arms race between the United States and China mirrors the Cold War-era nuclear competition. This is a classic cooperation problem: both nations have a vital interest in preventing uncontrolled AI development while ensuring they do not fall behind their rival. The solution, as with nuclear weapons, lies in a disarmament treaty backed by a verification regime.

While the U.S. and China must take the lead, the agreement must be multilateral to prevent AI proliferation. International cooperation is essential to containing the AI threat before it escalates beyond human control.

Global Control under the United Nations

[What does the Survival Bill say?](#)

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What does the Survival Bill say?

In the medium term, the next UN Secretary-General **must push for the creation of global institutions that will ensure AI is developed safely, sustainably, and inclusively.**

Even with a short-term ban, the development of AI can erode under geopolitical tensions, corporate lobbying, or rogue labs. We need sustained oversight and credible enforcement. Like a country's governance system, this framework should include regulatory, executive and judiciary branches, along with a global research hub.

The next UN Secretary-General must call for the creation of three new institutions. The **International AI Safety Agency (IAISA)** will establish rules and enforce decisions, functioning as a global ministry for AI. By pooling national and corporate AI resources, the **Global Unit for AI Research and Development (GUARD)** will become the sole legal entity for conducting frontier AI research. Finally, the **AI Tribunal** will resolve disputes related to AI research and development and ensure compliance.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

The next UN Secretary-General needs to oversee the development of institutions that have the power to make AI safe. Atlas proposes the adoption of an institutional framework consisting of three bodies drawing parallel with good democratic governance. A regulatory-executive agency would act like a national government but for global AI governance, under the guidance of a Citizens Assembly (see Atlas' policy to [Give People Power over Artificial Intelligence](#)). A research unit that pools national resources and establishes a monopoly over dangerous AI research. Finally, a judiciary branch that resolves disputes and upholds justice.

1. Regulatory-executive branch: The United Nations must create a new agency, the International Artificial Intelligence Safety Agency (IAISA) to govern AI development.
2. Pooled research: The United Nations must create a Global Unit for AI Research & Development (GUARD) that would become the only legal place to carry out frontier AI research.
3. Judiciary branch: The United Nations must create an AI Tribunal to resolve disputes about AI research and development and implementation.

What problems are these policies addressing?

Even with a short-term ban (see Atlas' policy [Stop Dangerous Artificial Intelligence](#)), the development of AI can erode under geopolitical tensions, corporate lobbying, or rogue labs. We need sustained oversight and credible enforcement. These institutions must be inclusive of all countries and reflect democratic ideals, not just realpolitik.

Beyond the existential threat of frontier AI research, the unregulated dissemination of AI tools throughout our economies and societies carries bad side effects that we can already observe today, but that are set to grow dramatically. They span from our environment (AI's carbon footprint), our economies (job displacement and wealth concentration), our politics (fake news and algorithmic polarisation), our rights (privacy), and war (autonomous weapons).

What impact will the proposed policies have?

The proposed institutional framework will establish a stable and enforceable international AI governance system that prevents uncontrolled superintelligence development while fostering safe AI research.

At the centre of this system is IAISA, a regulatory-executive body modelled after the International Atomic Energy Agency. IAISA will set and enforce global AI safety standards, administer the multilateral verification regime (as recommended in *Stop Dangerous Artificial Intelligence*), oversee GUARD, and appoint members of the AI Tribunal. It will ensure that AI development remains transparent, accountable, and within internationally agreed-upon boundaries. To democratize governance, IAISA will propose regulatory options for AI research and implementation, which will be debated and decided through a Citizens' Assembly—ensuring public participation in key decisions (see also [Give People Power over AI](#)).

GUARD will function as a cooperative research institution with a controlled monopoly over frontier AI development. By pooling national resources, it will mitigate dangerous competitive dynamics and ensure that cutting-edge AI advancements benefit all. While less advanced AI research remains open to competition, GUARD will serve as the safeguarded hub for the most powerful innovations, operating under IAISA's strict safety protocols and oversight (see Atlas' policy [Artificial Intelligence Profits for All, Not Just a Few](#)). Its structure must balance the influence of countries contributing the most resources with inclusive participation from those with limited AI capacity.

The AI Tribunal will act as an independent adjudicatory body, resolving disputes over violations such as illicit training runs or unauthorized model weight transfers, and interpreting IAISA's regulatory framework. This will uphold compliance with international AI laws and deter efforts to circumvent safety measures.

Together, IAISA, GUARD, and the AI Tribunal form a long-term governance architecture that prevents AI proliferation, ensures compliance through credible verification and enforcement, and promotes a cooperative approach to development. By aligning oversight, safety, and equitable progress, this system ensures that AI serves the common good rather than becoming an existential threat.

Robust mechanisms—including inspections, audits, and legal enforcement—will underpin this framework, removing incentives for unsafe development and offering a structured, collaborative path forward. Through transparency, accountability, and

collective decision-making, the system prevents AI from exceeding safe limits while maximizing its benefits for all.

Read more: Andrea Miotti, Tolga Bilge, Dave Kasten and James Newport (April 2025) “A Narrow Path: How to Secure Our Future.” https://pdf.narrowpath.co/A_Narrow_Path.pdf

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

The proposed policies can be adopted by establishing new binding UN institutions through an international treaty, similar to frameworks governing nuclear non-proliferation and global trade. Countries must negotiate and ratify a UN AI Safety Treaty, legally mandating the creation of IAISA, GUARD, and the AI Tribunal with clear enforcement mechanisms. The treaty should be backed by powerful verification systems, compliance incentives, and penalties for violations, ensuring adherence.

All nations have a vital interest in the safety of AI research and development. All nations also have an interest in sharing that research. While the United States and China are currently locked in a race for supremacy in that field, that race is self-destructing such that they, too, have an interest in moving from competition to collaboration (see Atlas’ policy [Stop Dangerous Artificial Intelligence](#)).

Artificial Intelligence Profits for All, Not Just the Few

[What does the Survival Bill say?](#)

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What does the Survival Bill say?

The next UN Secretary-General must ensure that **advanced AI benefits humanity as a whole** and not the few and privileged.

If we continue business as usual AI profits will go to a smaller and smaller number of countries, corporations or even just a few dozen individuals.

The next UN Secretary-General must call for the establishment of an **international tax on large AI-based revenues** to fund a **Universal AI Dividend Fund**, which will finance global economic, social and environmental programs, ensuring AI-driven prosperity benefits all.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

Once we halt dangerous AI capabilities and establish a long-term framework for safe development, we can finally focus on the benefits of advanced AI. Atlas proposes policies to tax AI profits, ensuring that all of humanity benefits by funding public-good AI applications. To achieve this, Atlas advocates for:

1. The establishment of an international tax on large AI-based revenues to fund a Universal AI Dividend Fund, which will finance global social and environmental programs, ensuring AI-driven prosperity benefits all.
2. The United Nations is investing in public good AI applications to accelerate progress in areas such as climate adaptation, healthcare, and sustainable development.

What problems are these policies addressing?

AI naturally drives economic power concentration by amplifying competitive advantages at an unprecedented scale. The company that develops the most advanced AI gains a runaway competitive edge, as AI-driven automation, decision-making, and efficiency improvements allow it to outperform and outmanoeuvre all rivals. Unlike traditional industries where innovation diffuses over time, AI's self-improving nature and reliance on proprietary data create a winner-takes-all dynamic, where the most powerful AI firm can continuously reinforce its dominance, acquiring more market share and resources while leaving competitors obsolete. Simultaneously, AI-powered corporations operating with minimal human labour costs can outcompete traditional businesses, as automated

workforces eliminate payroll expenses, dramatically reducing overhead and maximizing efficiency. This shift concentrates economic power into the hands of a few AI owners and operators, who control vast, hyper-efficient AI labour forces that undercut human-reliant companies, leading to widespread economic consolidation and deepening wealth inequality. Without intervention, AI will not only disrupt industries, it will also centralize unprecedented levels of power in the hands of a select few.

The Universal AI Dividend Fund will serve as countermeasures against extreme AI-driven wealth concentration. By implementing a tax on AI usage based on computing power, this policy ensures that the economic gains from AI are redistributed, rather than hoarded by a handful of corporations. This tax would generate a sustainable funding source for global social and environmental programs, ensuring that AI's benefits extend beyond corporate profit margins. By linking taxation to compute power rather than profits, the policy prevents loopholes and tax avoidance strategies that dominant AI firms might otherwise exploit, ensuring that the wealth created by AI contributes to the broader well-being of society.

While private AI development will continue to drive innovation, it will naturally prioritize profitability over the public good, potentially neglecting essential but less lucrative applications. Public investment in AI applications ensures that critical areas like climate adaptation, disease prevention, and democratic integrity receive the necessary funding and attention. Without deliberate intervention, AI advancements could exacerbate inequality and environmental degradation, as profit-driven models rarely prioritize long-term societal stability. By strategically directing AI resources toward public interest initiatives, this policy ensures that AI serves humanity as a whole, rather than solely enriching a corporate elite.

What impact will the proposed policies have?

While private AI development will continue to innovate, it is likely to prioritize profitability over broader societal benefit. Public investment in AI applications will ensure crucial but less profitable areas, such as climate resilience, disease prevention, and democratic integrity, receive necessary support.

At the same time, the AI revenue tax and Universal AI Dividend Fund will prevent extreme AI-driven wealth concentration. By taxing AI usage based on computing power, this policy creates a sustainable funding source for social and environmental programs that benefit humanity as a whole.

Together, these measures will allow AI to help eradicate poverty, mitigate ecological threats, and enhance global well-being, at the same time preventing the unchecked rise of monopolies that control AI's benefits.

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

To implement these policies, Atlas proposes binding international agreements under the United Nations. The UN must establish a global AI regulatory framework that includes taxation mechanisms and public investment strategies. This would involve:

- Drafting an international treaty to establish AI revenue taxation and public AI investment frameworks.

- Creating an independent UN body to administer AI revenue collection and distribute funds toward global initiatives.
- Ensuring participation from AI industry leaders to secure compliance and collaboration.

By anchoring these policies in the UN system, equitable AI governance can be enforced on a global scale, ensuring AI's benefits are shared universally rather than captured by a few powerful actors.

STOP WARS

The wars in Ukraine and Gaza make headlines around the world, while others continue to destroy Ethiopia, Libya, Myanmar, the Sahel region, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen and other countries. [Hundreds of thousands](#) die, more are injured, and entire areas are razed to the ground. Conflicts deny fundamental rights and dreams to whole generations, devastate ecosystems and erase cultural heritage.

Today's wars divide nations close to breaking point, paralysing the United Nations. The institution is stuck in the hands of superpowers, refusing to stand by international rules, hypocritically choosing when to act against aggression and when to provide diplomatic cover to war crimes. Humanity's best chance to decrease conflicts and avert the risk of nuclear war is to **radically reform the United Nations so that it can end wars, regulate weapons and ensure our survival**. It must have the competencies, legitimacy, and resources needed.

We won't lie. Superpowers do not want to lose their privilege and untouchability nor yield power to a supranational organisation. But doing so remains fundamental: how else can the United Nations ensure peace and security?

[Make the UN a Real Peace-Builder](#)

[Commit to Mutual Self-Defence](#)

[Make Nuclear Weapons History](#)

Make the UN a Real Peace-Builder

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What does the Survival Bill say?

The next Secretary-General must **reform the United Nations** to be capable of avoiding and ending wars.

The United Nations is currently unable to fulfil its mission of ensuring peace and security. The wars against Ukraine and Gaza are perfect examples of a few superpowers blocking action to stop ongoing crimes. That's due to five countries having veto power over ... anything..., and the UN's top court's inability to [enforce international law](#).

For the UN to have a chance at delivering peace on security, the next UN leader must:

- work to abolish the Security Council permanent members' veto right, if need be by ignoring it, and
- make the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court compulsory for and enforceable on all UN member states.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

1. UN member-states must abide by international law, accept the mandatory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, and adhere to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
2. The United Nations must amend its Charter to rescind the veto right of the Security Council's permanent members. This can be done by a "legal coup" if necessary, through a near-unanimous vote of the General Assembly. As long as that is not done, each permanent member must unilaterally renounce the use of its veto right.

What problems are these policies addressing?

The United Nations already has the moral, legal, and military power to bring about world peace. The UN Security Council has the authority to determine which actions of member-states constitute threats to international peace and order economic sanctions or military interventions to stop them. All UN members are legally required to apply the sanctions and provide military force to implement the Security Council's decisions, in case diplomacy alone fails.

The only – but critical – problem is that the permanent members of the Security Council disagree more often than not on the right course of action to resolve crises, and they have the right to veto each other's proposals. Inaction ensues, and armed conflicts flare up. Rescinding the veto right would address the Achilles Heel of the current system.

The permanent members' veto is actually the only check to the Security Council's immense power. Removing it could create another problem: the United Nations could become oppressive. The aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War gives a foretaste of that: the UN Security Council imposed draconian economic sanctions against Iraq, coupled with a humanitarian program, which Iraq's dictator Hussein manipulated to oppress his people. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians died as a result of the sanctions and ill-functioning humanitarian program. Despite of that horrendous situation, the UN Security Council failed to significantly alter its policy for a whole decade until Hussein was overthrown by a US invasion in 2003. The 1990s were an era of US hegemony when both China and Russia were less assertive to exercise their veto right. Such situation could happen again without veto rights, with a majority of UN Security Council members imposing sanctions or authorizing the use of force on one or more UN members in a way that could constitute a crime against humanity. That makes it critically important that UN members accede to the Statutes of the International Court.

What impact will the proposed policies have?

The proposed policies will enable the International Court of Justice to resolve more disputes before they turn violent, and the UN Security Council to adopt more resolute measures much faster to resolve armed conflicts. These policies are not sufficient to end all wars, as the majority of Security Council members may in some cases be reluctant to impose sanctions for fear of their economic cost to themselves, or to authorize the use of force for fear of casualties among their own soldiers. The solutions adopted by a majority of Security Council members may also not always be the wisest to ensure sustainable peace.

These policies, while addressing a systemic problem preventing to end wars, must therefore be complemented with wise, case-by-case approaches to individual conflicts.

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

The proposed policies are straightforward legal changes that only require political will. Atlas will campaign to create that political will in all democratic countries. Dictatorships are likely to be very reluctant to adhere to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and Russia and China to renounce their veto right as permanent members of the UN Security Council. An amendment to the UN Charter to remove that veto right can itself be vetoed by the permanent members. Atlas therefore proposes a Plan B to go around the opposition of dictatorships and permanent members of the UN Security Council: see Atlas' policy to [Commit to Mutual Defence](#).

An alternative avenue to rescind veto rights despite of the permanent members' veto would be a "legal coup", through a near-unanimous vote by the UN General Assembly. Nearly all UN members would vote a resolution saying that they will henceforth abide by UN Security Council resolutions approved by nine of the fifteen members of the Council (which is the current majority requirement) even if some permanent members vote against them. The resolution would also call on the UN Secretary General and

other UN organs to do the same. The former part of the resolution (each country ignoring the vetoes) is not illegal (unless it contravenes another resolution that passed with the approval of the permanent members). The latter (UN organs ignoring the vetoes) is. However, if a near-unanimity of UN members not only adopted such a resolution, but also abided by it consistently over a significant amount of time – two non-trivial necessary conditions – it could eventually become customary law and supersede the UN Charter.

Commit to Mutual Defence

[What does the Survival Bill say?](#)

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What does the Survival Bill say?

The next UN Secretary-General must support the development of a **mutual defence system among democracies**.

UN member-states already have the obligation to militarily assist each other when called upon by the Security Council. However, that security guarantee is very weak because of the Security Council's dysfunction. Ukraine is just the latest instance of a UN member state suffering an invasion without consequences whatsoever on the aggressor.

Through this, democratic countries will benefit from an **enhanced security guarantee and be compelled to protect each other in case of aggression** - without possibilities of opt-out - and to take steps to integrate and coordinate their defence, while respecting international law and remaining under the authority of the Security Council when it does find the resolve to act.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

1. The United Nations must adopt a Framework Convention on Peace and Democracy (aka Peace and Democracy Treaty), a core element of which must be

the commitment of its state parties to militarily assist each other to protect their territorial integrity and sovereignty when one of them is aggressed, even in the absence of a UN Security Council resolution, consistently with international law that allows the use of force in self-defence.

2. The Peace and Democracy Treaty must also include binding legal commitments to respect, protect and fulfil civil and political rights and international law, including:
 - a. Accepting the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice.
 - b. Criminalising aggression in national law and adhering to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
 - c. Running free and fair elections.
 - d. See additional requirements in Atlas' policies to [Unite Democracies in a Caucus](#) and to [Give Countries a Stake in Democracy](#).States that fail to abide by these provisions would be expelled from the Treaty.
3. UN member-states must adhere to such Peace and Democracy Treaty.

What problems are these policies addressing?

Atlas' policy to [Make the United Nations a Real Peace-Builder](#) argues that the UN Security Council already has the authority and power to stop wars, but a key systemic hurdle is the veto rights of its five permanent members. The policy calls for amending the UN Charter to rescind that privilege. However, the permanent members can also veto amendments to the UN Charter.

Moreover, the permanent members have sufficient military power to undermine and even deter some UN decisions even without their veto right. For example, without Russia's veto right, the Security Council could adopt measures to protect Ukraine, but it would probably refrain from calling on the use of force against Russia in order to avoid nuclear war.

The purpose of the Peace and Democracy Treaty is to be a Plan B, in case the UN Security Council failed to reform itself, which would provide security to at least a subset of UN member-states: those committed to international law and human rights.

What impact will the proposed policies have?

If a state party to the Peace and Democracy Treaty were aggressed by another UN member-state and if the UN Security Council failed to do its job by protecting the former, the aggressed state could count on the collective self-defence of all state parties of the Peace and Democracy Treaty.

Although it is theoretically possible that the Peace and Democracy Treaty would itself fail to fulfil its mission, it is less likely. First, state parties to the Peace and Democracy Treaty would be a more cohesive group with more aligned values than the entire UN membership, as they would all be democracies. Second, these state parties would know that, if they failed to step in to defend another caucus member, the Treaty would lose its credibility and they would find themselves on their own in case they were themselves aggressed. That is the "one for all, all for one" principle. Third, the Treaty's

conference of parties would make its decisions through qualified majority voting, hence no single state could block action.

In addition to its cohesiveness and decisiveness, another critical element for the Peace and Democracy Treaty to ensure effective deterrence is that its state parties must collectively harness sufficient military power. Considering the current balance of military power in the world, if most democracies adhered to the Treaty, that should be the case.

The Peace and Democracy Treaty will set in motion a dynamic towards ending all wars within our lifetime. It will create an island of peace and security – the state parties to the treaty – which nobody will dare to attack because of its power, which will not be threatening to those on the outside because of its respect of international law, and which will incrementally expand to the whole world as all countries eventually embrace democracy and international law (see Atlas' policies to [Unite Democracies in a Caucus](#) and to [Give Countries a Stake in Democracy](#)).

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

The UN General Assembly can approve UN conventions (or treaties) by a simple majority, where each UN member-state has one vote, without veto rights. Any UN member-state can then sign and ratify the treaty, according to its own constitutional requirements (usually the government signs and parliament ratifies with a super-majority vote). The treaty enters into force once a minimum number of states (specified in the treaty) have ratified it. Once in force, the treaty is legally binding only on the states that have ratified it. So-called “framework conventions” are multilateral treaties that address a broad policy area and provide a basic legal framework to tackle them, and to which a series of “protocols” can be added later on to deal with more specific issues. Parties to the framework convention can choose whether or not to also adhere to each protocol.

Atlas will campaign in all democratic countries to build political support for the Peace and Democracy Treaty.

Why link peace and democracy?

There are four reasons why the Peace and Democracy Treaty, while open to all UN member-states, will expel those that do not run free and fair elections.

First, democracy and the respect of human rights are critical to prevent civil wars.

Second, it is hard enough in democracies to ask soldiers to fight to protect another country. It is harder still if that country is a dictatorship; it would be dealing with one evil (aggression) with another (propping up a dictatorship). There is greater alignment of values among democracies, hence greater chance that collective self-defence will hold. Historically there have been relatively few wars between democracies, and more solidarity among democracies.

Third, Atlas values democracy, which is currently in retreat in many countries. We need to give countries a stake in democracy, and collective self-defence can be one such incentive.

Fourth, Atlas cannot run for office in dictatorships and we can't otherwise influence the foreign policy of dictatorships from within them. We must tailor our policy goals to our potential influence, which lies in democracies.

How can you tell whether a country complies with international law?

The International Court of Justice can adjudicate any legal disputes among states. But its decisions are not binding, unless states accept its compulsory jurisdiction. All countries must do so and actually implement the court's decisions. It must be a requirement for adhering to the Peace and Democracy Treaty.

How can you tell whether a country is a democracy?

The test will be for a state party to the Peace and Democracy Treaty to run regular, free and fair elections for local, state (if applicable) and national governments. "Free" means that anyone (with reasonable exceptions such as the exclusion of children and criminals) can vote with a secret ballot and stand for election, and that votes are counted accurately. "Fair" means that rules around election campaigns must not be biased toward incumbents (e.g., air time on public television).

The treaty will set up international teams of election monitors to check that elections are free and fair, building on the experience of similar work already carried out by a number of institutions such as the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe. Based on the fact findings of such teams, any state party to the Peace and Democracy Treaty will be able to sue any other state for breach of the free and fair elections requirements, and the International Court of Justice will rule whether a breach has indeed taken place, in which case it could order a remedy and, if the state does not comply, the court could declare that the state is no longer party to the treaty.

What do you mean by criminalising aggression?

Aggression (i.e., one sovereign state attacking another) is already a crime for which individual officials can be held accountable according to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. However, many states are not members of the International Court of Justice, and international legal processes tend to be lengthy. State parties to the Peace and Democracy Treaty must criminalise aggression in their own national legislations, just as war crimes. In other words, the heads of government and military would be criminally prosecuted in their national courts if they started a war. Funding rebel groups fighting the government of a sovereign state must also be criminalized.

Wouldn't these proposals start a new cold war?

A cold war alas already exists between the West and Russia, Iran, and North Korea. Tensions are high between the West and China, including an arms race and a trade war (although trade relations between them remain very important to both sides).

Russia and China's policies on climate, trade and other global issues are driven by their interests and are unlikely to be substantially altered if some democratic countries form a closer alliance.

The aspect of Russia's and China's foreign policy that is likely to be most impacted is their bilateral relationships with countries in their vicinity: they will use their leverage to deter such countries from adhering to the Peace and Democracy Treaty. Such countries are already feeling caught in the middle of big power politics and are often reluctant to pick sides as they are subject to Chinese or Russian bullying when they get closer to the West. Democratic neighbours of China and Russia will choose by themselves whether to join the treaty or not. But merely having the option to join will empower them against such bullying, as Chinese and Russian authorities will have to reckon that too much pressure on their neighbours could throw them in the arms of democracies. In the worst case, Russia or China could invade their neighbour to pre-empt them from joining the treaty (a similar situation to that of Russia invading Ukraine to prevent it from joining NATO). Only a few countries are in that situation and should be handled on a case-by-case basis. If on the contrary China and Russia try to keep their neighbours out of the Peace and Democracy Treaty through positive incentives, that is all the better for these neighbours.

How will the proposed policies impact the security of countries that are not democratic?

Countries that choose not to adhere to or that are expelled from the Peace and Democracy Treaty will not be affected by it. Their security will continue to be protected by the UN Security Council, with all its limitations.

The Peace and Democracy Treaty could nevertheless have a positive indirect impact on the security of countries that do not join it, by improving decision-making at the UN Security Council in the long term. The Council currently fails to act decisively to resolve most conflicts because of the distrust among its permanent members. There is ground to distrust even democracies, as they have violated international law in the past. For example, NATO intervened in the Kosovo War of 1997 without authorization of the UN Security Council. By criminalising aggression in their national laws, the state parties to the Peace and Democracy Treaty will send a clear signal that such violations are history and that they do not threaten other countries. Over time, such a strict policy of non-aggression will reduce the distrust of other countries toward democracies, and will ease decision-making within the UN Security Council. The case of Libya in 2011 (where the UN Security Council did approve a NATO intervention, which then went too far according to Russia and China) shows that persuading China and Russia to agree to a military intervention to restore peace is not hopeless, but also that it should not be abused. If Britain, France and the United States consistently respected the Chinese and Russian vetoes, China and Russia would over time become less defensive and more cooperative. Trust can be earned over time through consistency of action.

Does Atlas endorse the Responsibility to Protect?

Yes. The Responsibility to Protect is a UN doctrine that allows the UN Security Council to authorise the use of force to put an end to major human rights violations in the context of civil wars. It is an exception to the general rule of non-intervention in domestic matters. Atlas agrees with it.

Does Atlas support “humanitarian wars”?

Depending on the circumstances, Atlas could support military operations aiming at putting an end to gross human rights violations (rather than self-defence), provided that they are authorised by the UN Security Council (see [Responsibility to Protect](#)).

We understand that, in the current geopolitical climate, authorization by the UN Security Council is unlikely. We do not support military interventions that lack UN Security Council backing because they lack broad international legitimacy. In the absence of an alternative, more legitimate global government, the United Nations is widely perceived as the most legitimate international body today. Despite the best intentions, any self-appointed coalition of the willing using force without UN authority is bound to sow discord and resentment, which will undermine our long-term goal of ending all wars. This is all the more true that, despite the fact that most if not all wars have involved serious violations of international humanitarian law, the main impediment to humanitarian wars has not been the vetoes at the UN Security Council, but rather the unwillingness of voters of powerful countries to put their own troops at risk and pay for military interventions (e.g., in Sudan or Ethiopia today). The decisive factor in starting humanitarian wars has proved to be the national interests of powerful countries, not the proclaimed humanitarian motives, which has unavoidably engendered great cynicism about the very concept of humanitarian wars.

Humanitarian wars can also easily be undermined: The permanent members of the UN Security Council have the power to undermine humanitarian military interventions. That has been the case of Russia in Libya and Syria, for instance.

Does Atlas support pre-emptive wars?

No. While it may be militarily expedient to start hostilities before an enemy’s expected attack, one cannot be absolutely sure that such attack will indeed materialise. Legitimising preemptive wars runs the high risk that countries would start wars simply when they see the balance of power shift in favour of their enemies. Wars should be prevented through diplomacy and deterrence.

Make Nuclear Weapons History

[What does the Survival Bill say?](#)

[What exactly does Atlas propose?](#)

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[How can the proposed policies be adopted?](#)

[Does Atlas support unilateral nuclear disarmament?](#)

[What if a country races to produce nuclear weapons?](#)

What does the Survival Bill say?

The next Secretary-General must **ensure all nuclear weapons are dismantled and removed.**

Since their inventions, nuclear weapons have been one of the biggest threats to our collective survival and today, once more, nations are heading towards re-armament and even considering live testing.

To ensure humanity's survival no new country can develop nuclear weapons and all countries having them must eliminate them together. For this, the next UN leader must ensure all countries **ratify and implement the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**, along with provisions for their verified elimination.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

- All UN member-states must adhere to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (aka Nuclear Ban Treaty).
- The United Nations must amend the Nuclear Ban Treaty to integrate the safeguards regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (aka Non-Proliferation Treaty). Once that is done, UN member-states must leave the latter as they adhere to the former.

What problems are these policies addressing?

By their nature, the use of nuclear weapons almost always constitutes a crime against humanity. They must therefore never be used. The mere possession of them constitutes a threat to use them.

Besides wilful use, another problem is the risk of accidental or theft and criminal use of nuclear weapons.

A third problem is the proliferation of nuclear weapons. All countries adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty except Israel, India, North Korea, and Pakistan, which have acquired nuclear weapons and are not bound by any non-proliferation rules. However, the inequity between the five countries that are allowed to possess nuclear weapons under that treaty (Britain, China, France, Russia, and the United States) and other countries represents a constant incentive for other countries to leave the treaty and acquire nuclear weapons. The Nuclear Ban Treaty closes that incentive by not allowing any country that adheres to it to possess or host nuclear weapons.

What impact will the proposed policies have?

If all countries forsake nuclear weapons, the risk of nuclear war – a definitive threat to humanity's survival – will disappear.

Although the cases of both North Korea (which used to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, but left it to acquire nuclear weapons) and Iran (which still adheres to the Non-Proliferation Treaty but has tested its limits in defiance of the UN Security Council and is now at the edge of nuclear weapons capability) suggest that any country could flout a nuclear ban in the future, they also demonstrate that the safeguards regime administered by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including verification procedures, works: they have not been able to develop nuclear weapons secretly and the UN Security Council has had ample time to act. What has been lacking in those two cases is the willingness of the UN Security Council to impose harsh enough sanctions to deter them from developing nuclear weapons. Surely, if the five permanent members no longer had nuclear weapons themselves, they would quickly agree to impose the harshest sanctions against any country starting to develop nuclear weapons, or even invade them if necessary. See also Atlas' policy to [Make the United Nations a Real Peace-Builder](#).

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

It is a matter of political will and Atlas will campaign in all democracies to create it.

The Nuclear Ban Treaty lacks any verification system. It is imperative that the safeguards regime of the Non-Proliferation Treaty be imported into the Nuclear Ban Treaty, as the Non-Proliferation Treaty must itself be discontinued to disallow the five official nuclear powers from possessing nuclear weapons.

Does Atlas support unilateral nuclear disarmament?

We call on all nuclear powers to disarm. They must not necessarily do it unilaterally.

What if a country races to produce nuclear weapons?

It will be caught by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the Security Council must then take all the necessary measures to deter it from following through, such as a comprehensive ban on trade with that country enforced by a blockade.

RESIST DICTATORSHIPS

Global freedom declined for the 18th year in [2023](#). Today, almost [40%](#) of the world's population lives under authoritarian rule. This impacts the billions of people directly affected, and us all. Authoritarian regimes increase the risk of conflicts and crises, threatening global peace. They are also [more illiberal](#) towards minorities, whose rights and freedoms are cracked down upon most.

No country alone has the leverage to push back against authoritarian states or protect freedom; it is fundamental to present a common front. For democracy to thrive, **countries believing in its values must unite internationally**. This way, they'll be able to coordinate sanctions and responses to authoritarian crackdowns and learn from one another to better democratic systems.

We won't lie. Standing against dictatorship isn't straightforward, especially when democracies commit some of the ills authoritarian states are accused of. But it is needed for humanity's future. How else could we start to improve it?

[Unite Democracies in a Caucus](#)

[Give Countries a Stake in Democracy](#)

Unite Democracies in a Caucus

[What does the Survival Bill say?](#)

[What exactly does Atlas propose?](#)

[What problems are these policies addressing?](#)

[What impact will the proposed policies have?](#)

[How can the proposed policies be adopted?](#)

[How can you tell whether a country is a democracy?](#)

[How do Atlas' proposals pass the Trump test?](#)

What does the Survival Bill say?

The next UN Secretary-General must facilitate the **creation of a Democracy Caucus** to lead the way in promoting democracy and human rights.

The protection of human rights has been a core mission of the United Nations since its creation. Nearly all countries have signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But let's face it, some are not committed to it, and the United Nations lacks the means to enforce human rights. Answers to clear breaches of human rights are not often confronted with a unitary front, weakening responses against oppressive states.

The Democracy Caucus will be opened for all countries to join, provided that they run free and fair elections certified by independent monitors. The Caucus will enable members to **coordinate responses and sanctions** to authoritarian crackdowns and threats and will **develop standards to protect democracy from interference and better protect and promote rights across borders**.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

To resist dictatorships, the United Nations must adopt a Framework Convention on Peace and Democracy (aka the Peace and Democracy Treaty) that will:

1. Require the states that accede to it to run free and fair elections.
2. Require the states that accede to it to also accede to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
3. Require the states that accede to it to vote as a block on civil and political rights matters in all UN bodies.
4. Develop protocols to protect democracy from external interference (e.g., fighting disinformation), and promote human rights across borders (e.g., fighting people trafficking, arms trafficking, bribery).
5. Have other provisions as described in Atlas' policies to [Commit to Mutual Defence](#) and [Give Countries a Stake in Democracies](#).

What problems are these policies addressing?

Promoting human rights has been core to the United Nations' mandate since its creation. Almost all countries have signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two core human rights conventions that derived from it: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

A first problem is that these conventions have no teeth. All countries that signed them are regularly monitored, but they face little more than reprimands or exhortation to improve in case of non-compliance.

A second problem is that the Human Rights Council, the main UN body in charge of human rights policy, includes and is sometimes chaired by dictatorships that are actively opposed to the promotion of human rights. That waters down even the rhetorical condemnation of human rights violations.

What impact will the proposed policies have?

Atlas' approach to strengthening the United Nations' role in promoting democracy and human rights is to create the United Nations that we want inside the United Nations that we have through a UN convention, starting with a coalition of the willing and incrementally expanding membership to the whole world.

The Peace and Democracy Treaty will require the states that accede to it to strengthen their respect for international law, human rights and democracy. While all UN member-states will be invited to accede to the treaty, some of them, especially dictatorships, will be put off by these obligations and choose not to join. But the treaty will also include benefits to incentivize countries to join. These incentives are detailed in Atlas' policy to [Give Countries a Stake in Democracy](#).

In an era where democracy is under assault even in long-established democracies, this approach will create an external incentive to achieve or maintain high standards of human rights, democracy and good governance while creating a tool for democracies to hold each other accountable to such standards. It is with a similar approach that the European Union has successfully strengthened democracy when it expanded to Southern and Eastern Europe. The European Union's experience also demonstrated that it is not enough for new members to attain high standards of human rights; a mechanism to enforce the preservation of such standards is also needed. Hence the Peace and Democracy Treaty will have a provision to expel countries that backslide on human rights.

The first positive impact of the treaty on human rights in the states that choose to accede to it will be that enforcement mechanism: countries that fail to run free and fair elections will be expelled from the treaty and lose the associated advantages. Running free and fair elections necessarily implies the protection of freedoms of speech and association. (See more on this enforcement mechanism in [How can you tell whether a country is a democracy?](#))

A second positive impact of the treaty on human rights in all states is that it will increase democracies' influence in UN human rights bodies by speaking with one voice, like a caucus in parliament. Prior to all UN votes on human rights matters, state parties to the treaty will choose to determine (or not) a common position by a double majority

vote: simple majority of state parties and simple majority of state parties weighted by their population. All state parties will then be expected to vote in the relevant UN organ according to the agreed common position. States that fail to do so could be expelled from the treaty, and lose all its associated advantages, if a two-third majority of state parties so decides.

A third positive impact will be to increase the effectiveness of democracies' efforts to promote human rights across borders and protect themselves against external interference. State parties will collaborate to develop rules, adopted in the form of additional protocols to the Peace and Democracy Treaty, to that effect. Such rules could include, for examples:

- Enhanced international cooperation and penalties in the fight against international arms trafficking, people trafficking, drugs trafficking, and money laundering.
- Ban on imports of goods and services made with slave labour.
- Ban on imports of goods and services made with child labour.
- Ban on activities of multinational corporations found guilty of bribing officials.
- No-contact policy with leaders suspected of having ordered political assassinations.
- Code of conduct for the media, social media, advertising, and entertainment industries to fight disinformation and avoid self-censorship about dictatorships.
- Code of conduct for multinational corporations in the information technologies and telecommunication industries that operate in dictatorships.
- Code of conduct for universities to avoid conflicts of interest with and self-censorship about dictatorships and to counter industrial espionage.
- Restrictions on the trade in specified sensitive technologies (especially though not necessarily military and dual-use technologies) with states that are not parties of the Peace and Democracy Treaty.

Some of these matters are already dealt with by existing UN bodies, others not. The default approach should always be to work with the whole UN membership to produce rules that are (almost) universally adopted. However, the states acceding to the Peace and Democracy Treaty will likely be willing to go further and adopt more constraining and effective rules in these areas than other states.

Such rules, even if adopted only by parties to the Peace and Democracy Treaty, will by their nature have an extra-territorial impact on other states. They will both increase the cost of human rights violations committed by dictatorships on their own citizens, and protect democracies from political interference by dictatorships.

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

The UN General Assembly can approve UN conventions (or treaties) by a simple majority, where each UN member-state has one vote, without veto rights. Any UN member-state can then sign and ratify the treaty, according to its own constitutional requirements (usually the government signs and parliament ratifies with a super-majority vote). The treaty enters into force once a minimum number of states (specified

in the treaty) have ratified it. Once in force, the treaty is legally binding only on the states that have ratified it. So-called “framework conventions” are multilateral treaties that address a broad policy area and provide a basic legal framework to tackle them, and to which a series of “protocols” can be added later on to deal with more specific issues. Parties to the framework convention can choose whether or not to also adhere to each protocol.

Atlas will campaign in all democratic countries to build political support for the Peace and Democracy Treaty.

Although on the one hand acceding to the treaty would require national governments to accept greater international scrutiny over their human rights records, that should not be a problem for those governments committed to free and fair elections anyway. Such governments would on the other hand benefit from the measures to protect and promote human rights across borders provided in the protocols to the treaty. There are other incentives for member-states to accede to the treaty, including collective self-defence (see Atlas’ policy to [Commit to Mutual Defence](#)) and measures particularly relevant for governments who are themselves committed to democracy but who govern states with weak institutions and strong opposition to human rights (see Atlas’ policy to [Give Countries a Stake in Democracies](#)). More generally, all democracies have an interest in building a rules-based world order reflecting their values, which is what the Treaty will do.

How can you tell whether a country is a democracy?

The test will be for a state party to the Peace and Democracy Treaty to run regular, free and fair elections for local, state (if applicable) and national governments. “Free” means that anyone (with reasonable exceptions such as the exclusion of children and criminals) can vote with a secret ballot and stand for election, and that votes are counted accurately. “Fair” means that rules around election campaigns must not be biased toward incumbents (e.g., airtime on public television).

The treaty will set up international teams of election monitors to check that elections are free and fair, building on the experience of similar work already carried out by a number of institutions such as the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe. Based on the fact findings of such teams, any state party to the Peace and Democracy Treaty will be able to sue any other state for breach of the free and fair elections requirements, and the International Court of Justice will rule whether a breach has indeed taken place, in which case it could order a remedy and, if the state does not comply, the court could declare that the state is no longer party to the treaty.

How do these proposals pass the Trump test?

Democracy and human rights are under unprecedented threats in the United States and to a lesser but still worrying degree in many other long-established democracies. International law is likewise being trampled upon by the same populist nationalist parties that attack democracy. Atlas does not resign itself to witnessing the end of democracy and the recrudescence of wars. The very dangerous current geopolitical situation is precisely what makes Atlas’ proposal most relevant and urgent.

We do not expect the United States to participate in negotiations for the Peace and Democracy Treaty under the Trump Administration. This is the time for the rest of the

world to refound the world rules-based order on stronger, fairer basis. President Trump's term will soon end, and we are confident that the United States will eventually join the Treaty because it will want to be part of shaping global rules. Meanwhile other countries must demonstrate a strict respect of international law because any self-interested departure from it undermines it and brings every country closer to catastrophe.

Give Countries a Stake in Democracy

[What does the Survival Bill say?](#)

[What exactly does Atlas propose?](#)

[What problems are these policies addressing?](#)

[What impact will the proposed policies have?](#)

[How can the proposed policies be adopted?](#)

[How can you tell whether a country is a democracy?](#)

What does the Survival Bill say?

The next UN Secretary-General must **create incentives for countries to strengthen democracy** through stronger political and socio-economic ties.

Authoritarian countries are gaining ground politically, economically and in terms of influence worldwide. Democracy is retreating worldwide for the [17th](#) year in a row.

Collaboration, preferential treatment and solidarity must happen for democracies to stand strong and appeal to others! This means 1) setting up a **Democracy Fund** to finance democratic transitions, 2) offering **trade preferences to other democracies** and 3) **fostering integration** via incentives to more inclusive immigration policies.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

To give countries a stake in democracy, the United Nations must adopt a Framework Convention on Peace and Democracy (aka the Peace and Democracy Treaty) that will:

1. Require the states that accede to it to run free and fair elections.
2. Set up a Democracy Fund to provide assistance to its low- and middle-income members to strengthen their governance and human rights protections.
3. Develop protocols to provide additional benefits to its members in the areas of trade and migration.
4. Have other provisions as described in Atlas' policies to [Commit to Mutual Defence](#) and [Unite Democracies in a Caucus](#).

What problems are these policies addressing?

Building democracy is hard work and demands political courage. Well-intentioned politicians in low- and middle-income countries often lack the resources and incentives to take on that goal and remain committed to it over the long term.

What impact will the proposed policies have?

The Peace and Democracy Treaty will set up a Democracy Fund. High-income countries that accede to it will be expected to fund it and prioritise it over other uses of their foreign aid (except for humanitarian aid). The fund will disburse grants to low- and middle-income countries that join the treaty to support legal and administrative reforms in the areas of freedom of expression and association, free and fair elections, public finance management, judiciary independence and capacity, transparency and accountability in the delivery of public services and digitalization of public services, and protections of women and of ethnic, gender and sexual orientation minorities.

The Democracy Fund will operate like UN aid agencies.

In addition to cash, the Peace and Democracy Treaty could also provide additional incentives for countries to accede to it. Atlas generally supports granting trade and migration

Last but not least, the mutual defence commitment of the Peace and Democracy Treaty is another powerful inducement for all countries to accede to it (see Atlas' policy to [Commit to Mutual Defence](#)).

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

The UN General Assembly can approve UN conventions (or treaties) by a simple majority, where each UN member-state has one vote, without veto rights. Any UN member-state can then sign and ratify the treaty, according to its own constitutional requirements (usually the government signs and parliament ratifies with a super-majority vote). The treaty enters into force once a minimum number of states (specified in the treaty) have ratified it. Once in force, the treaty is legally binding only on the states that have ratified it. So-called "framework conventions" are multilateral treaties that address a broad policy area and provide a basic legal framework to tackle them, and to which a series of "protocols" can be added later on to deal with more specific issues. Parties to the framework convention can choose whether or not to also adhere to each protocol.

Atlas will campaign in all democratic countries to build political support for the Peace and Democracy Treaty.

How can you tell whether a country is a democracy?

The test will be for a state party to the Peace and Democracy Treaty to run regular, free and fair elections for local, state (if applicable) and national governments. "Free" means that anyone (with reasonable exceptions such as the exclusion of children and criminals) can vote with a secret ballot and stand for election, and that votes are counted accurately. "Fair" means that rules around election campaigns must not be biased toward incumbents (e.g., air time on public television).

The treaty will set up international teams of election monitors to check that elections are free and fair, building on the experience of similar work already carried out by a number of institutions such as the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe. Based on the fact findings of such teams, any state party to the Peace and Democracy Treaty will be able to sue any other state for breach of the free and fair elections

requirements, and the International Court of Justice will rule whether a breach has indeed taken place, in which case it could order a remedy and, if the state does not comply, the court could declare that the state is no longer party to the treaty.

REBUILD THE UNITED NATIONS

Our survival is at risk. Climate change, artificial intelligence, wars, dictatorship, pandemics, and poverty all have the potential to destroy humanity unless they are tackled quickly.

Those threats are global, and the United Nations cannot deal with them due to its undemocratic and outdated setup. Even its leader, the Secretary-General, is chosen in an opaque process by countries seeking to uphold the status quo.

We must rebuild the United Nations. The next Secretary-General must, of course, **stop 5 superpowers from controlling the UN** & prioritising their national interest, and make international law enforceable. But she must go further and **ensure the UN has the necessary competencies and legitimacy to ensure our survival.**

[Give People the Power](#)

[Give the UN the Money it Needs](#)

[Deal with Global Issues](#)

[Make the UN More Efficient](#)

Give People the Power

[What does the Survival Bill say?](#)

[What exactly does Atlas propose?](#)

[What problems are these policies addressing?](#)

[What impact will the proposed policies have?](#)

[How can you tell whether elections are “free and fair”?](#)

[How can the proposed policies be adopted?](#)

What does the Survival Bill say?

The next Secretary-General **must give people a vote** for the UN to have the legitimacy and credibility to solve survival threats.

Confidence in the United Nations is sinking. The organization is not only held back by outdated structures but also by the denial of any meaningful involvement of the global population. Countries put their national interest first, trumping the global one.

People must have the ultimate decision-making power for the UN to have the legitimacy to act on survival threats. The next UN leader must do so by:

1. Establishing a democratic election for the United Nations Secretary-General.
2. Creating a democratically elected UN People's Assembly to act as a second chamber alongside the UN General Assembly. The Assembly will be directly elected by the people in a single worldwide constituency to ensure that representatives defend the global interest, not national interests.
3. Creating a global television network and other media channels run by the UN, to provide news reflecting diverse national perspectives to the world electorate and stimulate a genuine global debate about global issues.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

To rebuild itself, the United Nations must:

1. Amend its Charter to create a People's Assembly with decision-making power equal to and jointly with the General Assembly. The People's Assembly must be elected directly by the people in free and fair elections monitored by UN staff – votes in countries that don't meet such standard should not be counted. All representatives to the People's Assembly must be elected by the world population, not by national constituencies, with the proportional representation system.
2. Amend its Charter as to have the UN Secretary General likewise elected directly by the world's population.
3. The state parties of the Peace and Democracy Treaty (see Atlas' policies to [Unite Democracies in a Caucus](#) and [Commit to Mutual Defence](#)) must pioneer the

People's Assembly by creating it as a decision-making body alongside national governments for all matters pertaining to that treaty.

4. Create UN media channels (television, radio, website) that will produce a daily world news report and political documentaries and talk shows translated in all national languages of UN member states. This content must be offered to all television channels for free, and countries that join the Peace and Democracy Treaty must be required to ensure that it is broadcasted on at least one of their national channels. The UN television channel must be run by the UN Secretariat, funded by the UN regular budget, and subject to the oversight of a private, independent and international association of journalists.

What problems are these policies addressing?

Inter-connectedness among people across the globe has increased dramatically since the creation of the united “nations”; it is time to unite people.

We need global solutions to solve global problems. For that we need more global solidarity. However, all politicians are elected by national or local constituencies, and see their jobs as pursuing national or local interests, not the global interest. We need global elections of representatives representing the whole world (rather than national constituencies) to debate and decide global policies that affect us all.

Like politicians, journalists cater to national media markets. A global television network and other media channels are needed to enable direct dialogue across diverse national perspectives on global public policy issues.

Democracy – as in “one person, one vote” – is as much needed at the global level as at the national level for the exact same reasons. In a world where the most populated UN member (India) is home to 146,496 times more people than the least populated one (Tuvalu), the UN principle of “one state, one vote” is illegitimate.

What impact will the proposed policies have?

A People's Assembly and UN television channel will increase understanding across the world's diverse people and establish dialogue and majority decision-making as an alternative to armed conflicts.

Majority voting along the ‘one person, one vote’ principle will dramatically rebalance decision-making power in the world in favour of poorer people, in much the same way as the adoption of universal suffrage did in Western countries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

How can you tell that elections are “free and fair”?

“Free” means that anyone (with reasonable exceptions such as the exclusion of children and criminals) can vote with a secret ballot and stand for election, and that votes are counted accurately. “Fair” means that rules around election campaigns must not be biased toward incumbents (e.g., air time on public television).

Teams of UN staff will monitor, building on the experience of similar work already carried out by a number of institutions such as the Organization of Security and

Cooperation in Europe. Based on the fact findings of such teams, any UN member state will be able to sue any other state for breach of the free and fair elections requirements, and the International Court of Justice will rule whether a breach has indeed taken place, in which case it could order a remedy and, if the state does not comply, the court could declare that the state is no longer party to the treaty.

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

The proposed policies entail changes to the UN Charter, which require political will. Atlas

will campaign to create that political will in all democratic countries. As dictatorships can veto such change, Atlas proposes a Plan B: the creation of the People's Assembly through the Peace and Democracy Treaty (see [Unite Democracies in a Caucus](#)), albeit with powers limited to the purview and state parties of that treaty.

Give the United Nations the Money It Needs

[What does the Survival Bill say?](#)

[What exactly does Atlas propose?](#)

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[What impact will the proposed policies have?](#)

[How do you balance the United Nations' budget?](#)

[How can the proposed policies be adopted?](#)

What does the Survival Bill say?

The next UN Secretary-General must enable the **creation of a global taxation system to directly and independently finance** its work and programmes, and the adoption of an adequate UN budget.

The United Nations is completely underfunded. Its total operating budget, including its agencies, hovers at around [USD 75 bln](#) (which is significantly smaller than that of New York City, standing at [USD 104 bln](#)), and is at the mercy of member states' willingness to pay up.

It is fundamental for the United Nations to:

- Create a **UN Tax Authority to raise taxes** to fund its operations and programmes, and
- **Adopt its budget by a two-third majority vote** of countries instead of unanimity, and to suspend voting rights of countries that don't pay up.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

The United Nations must:

1. Apply the existing provision in its Charter to adopt its budgets and change the membership fee formula with a two third majority of member-states at the General Assembly (without vetoes by permanent members).
2. Apply the existing provision in its Charter to suspend the voting rights of member-states that fail to pay their membership fee.
3. Amend its Charter to give it taxing power.

See also Atlas' policy [Artificial Intelligence Profits for All, not Just for the Few](#) that also calls for a UN tax on corporate profits derived from Artificial Intelligence.

What problems are these policies addressing?

The United Nations currently has two kinds of revenue:

- Assessed contributions by member-states: They are the “membership fee” that each UN member state must pay based on a uniform formula that takes into account GDP and a few other factors. This fee only covers the core administrative costs of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, as well as peacekeeping operations.
- Donations: UN programs to fight poverty, promote human rights or protect the environment are funded by voluntary donations from member-states (and sometimes private philanthropies). They are accounted as part of countries’ Official Development Assistance (i.e., foreign aid).

According to the UN Charter, both the membership fee and the core budget of the United Nations must be approved by a two-third majority of member-states at the UN General Assembly. It is not subject to the veto right of permanent members of the Security Council. Donations are of course at the entire discretion of member-states.

There are three problems with this financing system for the United Nations. First, there is an expectation and practice to adopt both the budget and membership fee formula by consensus rather than super-majority voting. As a result, the membership fee formula has not changed for decades, as it is a zero-sum game and it takes only one country to block any change. The level of the United Nations’ core budget has not increased much over time, as high-income countries can block substantial increases, of which they would have to bear most of the burden according to the current formula. The bulk of the United Nations’ funding, which covers everything beyond core administrative costs, therefore comes from donations. That gives each individual high-income country that provides donations the ability to micro-manage what the United Nations is spending its money on. While there is no earmarking of the membership dues, all donations are earmarked such that most of the UN budget is earmarked: member-states give to specific funds with specific missions, and oftentimes for specific projects within these funds. Earmarking is not a healthy democratic practice.

A second problem is that the sanction for non-payment foreseen by the Charter is simply not implemented. That results in recurrent financial difficulties for the United Nations, either because some member-states find themselves in financial difficulties themselves, or because some members don’t pay to express their disapproval with the United Nations’ work.

The third problem is that the United Nations lacks its own resources. While the European Union and a few other international organizations have their own taxation powers (e.g., custom duties), the United Nations currently does not.

What impact will the proposed policies have?

Ending the tradition of consensus to set the UN budget would make it much easier both to change the membership fees formula (e.g., by making it more progressive: higher rates for higher GDPs) and to significantly increase the budget. Many if not most humanitarian, development and environmental spending could potentially be moved from the supplementary budget (funded by donations) to the core budget. Rich countries would likely react to that by decreasing donations, but that is fine to the extent that the core budget integrates spending wanted by the supermajority of countries: that is how democracy works. Moving development spending to the core budget would spread responsibility to fight poverty, as newly rich countries (which typically do not spend a lot on foreign aid) would be expected to contribute as well. It

would change the paradigm of fighting world poverty from charity to a democratic, joint undertaking; it may increase accountability.

There may be a fear that low-income countries would use their majority at the UN General Assembly to impose a steep transfer of resources from high- to low-income countries through the UN budget. That may have happened in the past, when there was greater international income inequality. However, today 65 out of 193 UN members are classified by the World Bank as “high-income countries” – just enough to block a two-third majority vote. Another 54 countries are “upper middle-income”. While abandoning consensus would likely result in higher UN budgets, the change is therefore not likely to be dramatic.

Holding member-states accountable for non-payment will decrease the propensity of the United Nations to find itself in a financial crisis and having to make drastic, short-term and ill-conceived savings, only to undo them once funding is restored.

Giving the United Nations some taxation power will give it more autonomy and more ability to grow.

How do you balance the United Nations’ budget?

Atlas supports financial responsibility and we have identified sufficient revenue sources to fund our ambitious proposals. Here is a summary of all spending and revenue streams called for by our Survival Bill.

United Nations			
Revenues		Spending	
Wealth tax on billionaires	233	Basic income for LDCs	238
Financial transaction tax	285	Job guarantee for LDCs	97
Artificial Intelligence Tax*	?	Climate fund (grants & loans)	1,300
Increase in UN membership fee	1,117		
TOTAL	1,635	TOTAL	1,635

Notes: US\$ billions (2023).

* Potentially enormous revenue that would enable much more spending, but impossible to predict at this time.

National governments			
Revenues		Spending	
End fossil fuels subsidies	1,102	Universal basic income**	4,352
Carbon tax	3,250	Increase in UN membership fee	1,117
Wealth tax on multi-millionaires	897*	Other national initiatives	74
End corporate tax avoidance	294*		
TOTAL	5,543	TOTAL	5,543

Notes: US\$ billions (2023).

* These estimates involve double-counting: taxing companies’ profits will decrease the wealth tax base.

** Assumes that all revenue from ending fossil fuels subsidies and carbon tax are used to compensate consumers through a universal basic income, which could be further increased with other revenue and saving sources including rationalizing including social protection schemes.

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

The supermajority voting and suspension of voting rights for non-payment are institutionally easy as they are rules already written in the UN Charter. That does not

mean they will be politically easy. They may lead some countries to leave the United Nations. That is a gamble that Atlas is willing to take. There is a real danger that the United Nations falls ever more into irrelevance if it continues to fail to deliver on its core missions. Increasing resources and discipline would increase the United Nations' ability to deliver, and hence bolster its reputation. That could more than compensate for the loss of a few members, who would likely come back if the United Nations did indeed become more effective.

Providing the United Nations with own resources is legally a much taller exercise, as it requires amending the UN Charter, which requires a two-third majority of members and is subject to the permanent members' veto rights. It is also politically more demanding. Own resources are what allows international organizations to grow autonomously, which is resisted by nationalists.

Adopting a UN financial transaction tax (see Atlas' policy [Raise the Funds to Stop Poverty](#)) will require setting up a UN tax authority interacting directly with companies settling financial transactions worldwide to collect the tax. That is a relatively small number of taxpayers, albeit administering a huge number of taxable transactions, which is appropriate for a new administration.

Atlas also proposes a more incremental way to establish own resources with the billionaires' tax (see Atlas' policy to [Raise the Funds to Stop Poverty](#)).

Deal with Global Issues

What does the survival Bill say?

What does the survival Bill say?

The next Secretary-General must **get the UN the competencies it needs** to manage global issues.

Climate change, artificial intelligence, wars, dictatorship, pandemics, and poverty all have the potential to destroy humanity unless they are tackled fast, everywhere. However, national governments still hold the ultimate decision-making power, putting humanity at risk and hampering responses.

The UN must have the competencies to manage global challenges and safeguard our future, such as global environmental policies or the regulation of disrupting technologies, to stand a chance at survival. Once global citizens can vote for a UN Parliamentary Assembly, the UN should be **given the powers and responsibilities for solving issues that can only be solved at a global level.**

Make the United Nations More Efficient

What does the Survival Bill say?

What exactly does Atlas propose?

What problems are these policies addressing?

What impact will the proposed policies have?

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

What does the Survival Bill say?

Once empowered by the people's vote and by tax revenues, the UN Secretary General must also **unshackle the UN from red tape**, become more **efficient** and more **accountable** to deliver solutions to the survival threats.

Perceptions of the UN as an inefficient and unaccountable bureaucracy are partially founded. The UN's mission evolved over time and its structures are not adapted to today's expectations.

A series of structural and managerial reforms are called for:

- Many **inter-governmental committees** that micro-manage the UN administration must be **disbanded**.
- The UN civil service must be strengthened with a **merit-based hiring and professional development system**.
- The UN **court of auditors** must be given **enforcement powers**
- The UN and its staff must become liable in **national or international courts**.

What exactly does Atlas propose?

To manage the United Nations better in order to deal with the survival threats, the UN Secretary General must propose a deep restructuring of the UN institutions, which member-states must approve, including:

1. The decommissioning of many intergovernmental committees to empower the Secretary General.
2. Merging most UN specialized agencies into the United Nations itself, under the direct authority of the UN Secretary General.
3. Strengthening the UN civil service with a merit-based hiring and professional development system.
4. Giving the UN Board of Auditors the same powers as courts of auditors have in democratic nations.
5. Making the United Nations as an institution, and its senior leaders personally, accountable to national or international courts.

What problems are these policies addressing?

A first problem is the dual structure of the United Nations. The United Nations was created as a diplomatic forum for governments to debate how to tackle global problems. The UN Secretariat was literally just that: a light administrative office providing a venue and facilitating meetings among representatives of national governments. There are now a plethora of such intergovernmental committees negotiating agreement on very narrow global problems. But the UN Secretariat has evolved into an organization that develops global public policies, and was complemented by a number of specialized agencies that deliver a range of public services to the world's citizens, much like governments do. The result is a dual structure: on the one hand, the UN Secretariat and UN agencies look much like national ministries; on the other hand, intergovernmental committees shadow the UN Secretariat and UN agencies' structures down to a very disaggregated level, as if sub-sub-sub-committees of national parliaments were overseeing the work of every unit of national ministries. That undermines the authority of the UN Secretary General and heads of UN agencies. The number of intergovernmental committees must be drastically reduced, refocusing intergovernmental negotiations at the level of the United Nations' main organs (e.g., General Assembly and its six committees, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Human Rights Council).

A second problem is the duplication of work among specialized UN agencies. For example, several agencies provide humanitarian assistance: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA, which is part of the secretariat), the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the UN High Commissioner to Refugees (UNHCR), and the World Food Program (WFP).

A third problem is poor human resources management at the United Nations. UN managers have too much discretion in hiring staff on temporary contracts; they rely too much on consultants and unpaid interns; key positions are assigned by the permanent members of the UN Security Council.

While the Secretary General must be empowered, she and her staff must also be accountable. A fourth problem is that the United Nations lacks some of the accountability mechanisms that we have come to expect from governments. The UN Board of Auditors can only make recommendations to the General Assembly; it lacks the enforcement powers that national courts of auditors have. Moreover, the United Nations and its staff enjoy complete legal immunity against any wrongdoing.

Read more: Gimenez-Corte (May 2018) "What's Wrong With the United Nations? (And Why Nobody Cares)", *International Politics Review* 6(1), pp.30-41.
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3332674

What impact will the proposed policies have?

Less micro-management by intergovernmental committees will empower the UN Secretary General to tackle the survival threats and other global problems. It will shift some power over policy details from national governments hamstrung by national interests to the UN Secretary General and her civil service who can pursue the interests of the whole of humanity. Coupled with her direct election (see Atlas' policy to [Give Power to the People](#)), less micro-management of the UN Secretary General by intergovernmental committees will make her more responsive to what the world's population wants and infuse legitimacy to the global decision-making process.

Fewer intergovernmental committees and less duplication among UN agencies will generate some cost savings for taxpayers.

Empowering the UN Board of Auditors and making the United Nations liable for wrongdoing will prevent or provide redress for abuses of power, like the sexual exploitation that UN peacekeepers have committed in war zones.

How can the proposed policies be adopted?

The fifth policy (making the United Nations and its staff accountable to national and international courts) can be decided by the UN Secretary General herself.

The four other policies must be approved by member-states, and some of them require amending the treaties that created the United Nations or its agencies. The UN Secretary General can however use her bully pulpit to condemn inefficiencies in the institutions she leads and champion reforms.