

TOP TEN OPERATIONAL FAILURES IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE - A cause-and-effect analysis (This document to be further developed and upgraded by Global Citizens and founders of the Earth Union.)

Central proposition: Humanity's greatest challenges are global, but the authority to address them remains fragmented among nations. Conflict, climate change, debt, hunger, displacement, trade disruption, health threats and technological risks cross borders, while financing, enforcement and accountability remain largely national. This mismatch creates a dangerous governance gap in which one crisis can intensify another, leaving humanity increasingly vulnerable to problems no nation can solve alone.

A. Executive Summary: The cause & effect of failures in global governance

- The world already has the UN, WHO, WTO, IMF, World Bank and many other institutions serving international or global public purposes. The structural problem identified in the source document is narrower and more specific: no single democratically accountable institution has limited but binding authority across the genuinely global problems that nations cannot solve independently.
- This paper distinguishes between (1) the structural cause, (2) the operational system failure, (3) the immediate effect, (4) the consequence for people, and (5) the wider cascade into other global risks.
- The purpose is not to claim that every statistical association proves direct causation. Rather, **it is to show how fragmented global governance can allow separate crises to compound one another.**

Note: Every case includes direct source links separately for the cause/system evidence and the effect/human consequence.

The recurring causal chain

STRUCTURAL CAUSE	Global problems exceed the authority, financing or enforcement capacity of existing institutions.
OPERATIONAL FAILURE	States retain decisive control, while international mechanisms depend on negotiation, voluntary commitments, fragmented mandates or unstable funding.
IMMEDIATE EFFECT	Collective action is delayed, underfunded, inconsistent or incomplete.
HUMAN CONSEQUENCE	People experience preventable insecurity: war, displacement, hunger, disease risk, loss of public services, economic shocks and environmental damage.
CASCADE EFFECT	One failure increases pressure on others - for example conflict can intensify displacement, hunger and debt; climate stress can intensify food insecurity and migration; debt stress can reduce health and education spending.

B. TOP 10 interlocked failures of present international systems

The ten warning signs are not ten independent problems. They form an interacting system. Weak peace and security mechanisms can increase displacement and hunger. Climate stress can intensify food insecurity, migration and fiscal pressure. Heavy debt service can reduce spending on health, education and resilience. Trade fragmentation can weaken growth and public revenue. Retreating development finance can then make it harder for vulnerable countries to absorb these shocks. AI and poorly governed global commons add new cross-border risks to a system already struggling with older ones.

1. Development finance retreats while human need remains enormous
2. The world enters a nuclear arms-control vacuum
3. Military spending rises while collective peacekeeping capacity shrinks
4. Climate policy remains national while the consequences are planetary
5. Pandemic governance still moves slower than infectious disease
6. The global commons acquire rules without coherent governance
7. Debt service crowds out human development
8. Hunger persists despite global productive capacity
9. Trade fragments along geopolitical lines
10. Artificial intelligence advances faster than global governance

The Cause and Effect

- Each section below traces the same sequence:
structural cause → operational failure → immediate effect → consequence for humanity → interlocking effect → possible TEU response.
- Separate clickable source links are provided for the system-side evidence and for the documented human consequence.
- The “structural cause” and “interlocking effect” are analytical syntheses of the cited evidence; they should not be read as proof that every listed relationship is a direct cause.

1. Development finance retreats while human need remains enormous

STRUCTURAL CAUSE	Essential global programs remain dependent on domestic budgets and political priorities in donor countries rather than on a predictable, need-based global financing mechanism.
OPERATIONAL FAILURE / EVIDENCE	Official development assistance fell 23.1% in 2025 to US\$174.3 billion. Core bilateral aid fell 26.3%; US ODA fell 56.9%. The Global Fund secured US\$12.64 billion against an US\$18 billion requirement, while Gavi secured more than US\$9 billion against a US\$11.9 billion ambition for 2026-30.
IMMEDIATE EFFECT	Programs for health, vaccination, poverty reduction and development face funding gaps, postponement or reduced reach when donor priorities change.
CONSEQUENCE FOR HUMANITY	People in lower-income and crisis-affected countries may face weaker access to disease prevention, health services and development support precisely when needs remain high.
INTERLOCKING / CASCADE EFFECT	Reduced development finance can amplify debt stress, health vulnerability, hunger and instability because governments with limited fiscal space have fewer resources to compensate for external funding losses.
TEU RELEVANCE	An Economic Union would seek a more predictable and need-based architecture for essential human development.
SYSTEM / CAUSE SOURCES	OECD — International aid fell sharply in 2025 Global Fund — Final Eighth Replenishment outcome Gavi — Global funding shortfall for 2026-2030
HUMAN EFFECT SOURCES	WHO — Impact of reductions in health ODA on health systems WHO — Health financing cuts disrupting essential services

2. The world enters a nuclear arms-control vacuum

STRUCTURAL CAUSE	Weapons capable of civilization-scale destruction remain primarily under national control, while the strongest strategic restraint depended on bilateral treaty arrangements.
OPERATIONAL FAILURE / EVIDENCE	New START expired on 5 February 2026. It was the last bilateral treaty framework limiting the strategic nuclear forces of the United States and Russia, which together possess roughly 90% of the world's nuclear weapons. All nine nuclear-armed states continued modernization programs.
IMMEDIATE EFFECT	Verification, transparency and negotiated restraint are weakened at the same time nuclear arsenals are being modernized.
CONSEQUENCE FOR HUMANITY	A miscalculation, escalation or arms race carries consequences far beyond the states making the decisions, including mass casualties and potentially civilization-scale damage.
INTERLOCKING / CASCADE EFFECT	Heightened strategic rivalry can also drive military spending, geopolitical bloc formation, trade controls and reduced cooperation on climate, health and development.
TEU RELEVANCE	A mature Political Union would require verified collective arrangements that reduce the ability of any one state to endanger everyone else.
SYSTEM / CAUSE SOURCES	SIPRI — After New START expires UN — Secretary-General on expiration of New START
HUMAN EFFECT SOURCES	ICRC — Nuclear weapons: humanitarian consequences and risks

3. Military spending rises while collective peacekeeping capacity shrinks

STRUCTURAL CAUSE	National security budgets are politically sovereign and readily mobilized, while collective conflict-prevention and peacekeeping depend on multilateral political consent and fragile pooled financing.
OPERATIONAL FAILURE / EVIDENCE	World military expenditure reached US\$2.887 trillion in 2025, while personnel deployed in multilateral peace operations fell to 78,633, the lowest level in at least 25 years. UN peacekeeping faced a roughly US\$2 billion funding shortfall in mid-2025.
IMMEDIATE EFFECT	Collective capacity to prevent, contain or stabilize conflicts becomes weaker relative to the resources mobilized for national military power.
CONSEQUENCE FOR HUMANITY	At the end of 2025, 117.8 million people were forcibly displaced, including 41.6 million refugees and 68.7 million internally displaced by conflict or violence. These figures do not prove that military spending itself causes displacement; they illustrate the human scale of unresolved conflict alongside weak collective peace capacity.
INTERLOCKING / CASCADE EFFECT	Conflict-driven displacement can increase hunger, disease exposure, fiscal pressure, aid dependence and political tension in both origin and host countries.
TEU RELEVANCE	The structural imbalance suggests a need for stronger, reliable collective conflict-prevention and peacekeeping mechanisms.
SYSTEM / CAUSE SOURCES	SIPRI — Trends in World Military Expenditure 2025 SIPRI — Developments and Trends in Multilateral Peace Operations 2025 UN Peacekeeping — Budget gaps threaten global peace efforts
HUMAN EFFECT SOURCES	UNHCR — Global forced displacement: figures at a glance

4. Climate policy remains national while the consequences are planetary

STRUCTURAL CAUSE	Every country benefits when others cut emissions, while the atmosphere is shared and enforcement rests largely on nationally determined commitments.
OPERATIONAL FAILURE / EVIDENCE	Even full implementation of current national climate pledges is estimated by UNEP to put the world on a 2.3-2.5 C warming path this century; current policies imply about 2.8 C. WMO reports 2015-2025 were the eleven warmest years on record, with 2025 about 1.43-1.44 C above the pre-industrial average.
IMMEDIATE EFFECT	Collective emissions reductions remain below what is required to align national action with the planetary nature of the risk.
CONSEQUENCE FOR HUMANITY	Rising climate risk threatens food systems, water security, health, livelihoods, homes and infrastructure, with the greatest burden often falling on populations with the least capacity to adapt.
INTERLOCKING / CASCADE EFFECT	Climate stress can intensify hunger, displacement, debt, development-finance needs and conflict risks, turning an environmental governance failure into an economic and humanitarian one.
TEU RELEVANCE	A global framework would need stronger collective incentives, accountability and burden-sharing while preserving legitimate national responsibilities.
SYSTEM / CAUSE SOURCES	UNEP — Emissions Gap Report 2025 WMO — State of the Global Climate 2025
HUMAN EFFECT SOURCES	WHO — Climate change and health

5. Pandemic governance still moves slower than infectious disease

STRUCTURAL CAUSE	Pandemic preparedness requires cross-border cooperation, but binding rules depend on prolonged negotiations, signature and ratification by sovereign governments.
OPERATIONAL FAILURE / EVIDENCE	WHO members adopted the Pandemic Agreement on 20 May 2025, but the Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing annex was still under negotiation on 18 September 2026. Until the annex is adopted, the Agreement cannot open for signature and ratification, after which 60 ratifications are required for entry into force.
IMMEDIATE EFFECT	The world can reach broad political agreement yet still lack an operational, enforceable preparedness framework before the next emergency.
CONSEQUENCE FOR HUMANITY	A fast-moving outbreak can spread before collective rules for surveillance, pathogen access, countermeasures and equitable benefits are fully functional, exposing lives, health systems and economies.
INTERLOCKING / CASCADE EFFECT	A pandemic shock can deepen debt, interrupt trade, disrupt education, increase hunger and force governments to divert resources away from long-term development.
TEU RELEVANCE	Global health security requires institutions able to convert agreement into operational preparedness faster than pathogens can cross borders.
SYSTEM / CAUSE SOURCES	WHO — PABS negotiations, 18 September 2026 WHO — Pandemic Agreement: implementation and ratification process
HUMAN EFFECT SOURCES	WHO — 14.9 million excess deaths associated with COVID-19, 2020–2021 World Bank — Evidence of global COVID-19 learning loss

6. The global commons acquire rules without coherent governance

STRUCTURAL CAUSE	Oceans, the deep seabed, atmosphere and outer space affect all humanity, but governance is divided among separate treaties, agencies and sector-specific regimes.
OPERATIONAL FAILURE / EVIDENCE	The High Seas Biodiversity Agreement entered into force on 17 January 2026, but deep-seabed mining regulations were still under negotiation, while space law does not provide a comprehensive prohibition on conventional weapons in outer space.
IMMEDIATE EFFECT	Rules develop unevenly across domains, leaving gaps, overlaps and differing levels of enforcement rather than one accountable planetary framework.
CONSEQUENCE FOR HUMANITY	Environmental damage, resource conflict, militarization or unsafe exploitation of shared domains can create costs borne by people and countries that had little role in the original decision.
INTERLOCKING / CASCADE EFFECT	Weak commons governance can feed security competition, environmental degradation and economic inequality, while creating new disputes that existing institutions must then manage separately.
TEU RELEVANCE	The case is for coherent stewardship of shared domains in which national actions can impose consequences on humanity as a whole.
SYSTEM / CAUSE SOURCES	UN — BBNJ Agreement entered into force 17 January 2026 International Seabed Authority — 2026 Mining Code negotiations UNOOSA — Outer Space Treaty framework
HUMAN EFFECT SOURCES	UNEP — Deep Sea Mining: environmental risks UNIDIR — Outer Space and Use of Force

7. Debt service crowds out human development

STRUCTURAL CAUSE	Global capital can move across borders quickly, while debt restructuring, borrowing costs and development finance are negotiated through multiple creditors, debtor governments and institutions.
OPERATIONAL FAILURE / EVIDENCE	UNCTAD reports that 3.4 billion people live in countries spending more on interest payments than on either health or education. Developing countries paid US\$921 billion in net public-debt interest in 2024; rising interest costs reduced fiscal space in 99 developing countries containing 5.5 billion people.
IMMEDIATE EFFECT	Governments lose fiscal room for basic services, infrastructure, resilience and productive investment.
CONSEQUENCE FOR HUMANITY	Citizens experience the consequences through constrained health and education budgets, weaker safety nets, slower development and reduced capacity to absorb shocks.
INTERLOCKING / CASCADE EFFECT	Debt pressure can increase hunger, health vulnerability and aid dependence; climate disasters, conflict or trade shocks can then worsen debt further, creating a self-reinforcing cycle.
TEU RELEVANCE	An Economic Union could seek rules that protect legitimate creditors while preventing debt service from permanently displacing basic human development.
SYSTEM / CAUSE SOURCES	UNCTAD — A World of Debt 2025 UNCTAD — As debt costs rise, development funding comes under pressure
HUMAN EFFECT SOURCES	UNCTAD — Rising debt costs squeeze schools, healthcare and development spending

8. Hunger persists despite global productive capacity

STRUCTURAL CAUSE	Food insecurity is shaped not only by production but by affordability, income, conflict, distribution, infrastructure and national inequality.
OPERATIONAL FAILURE / EVIDENCE	About 645 million people were undernourished in 2025, 2.1 billion experienced moderate or severe food insecurity, and about 2.7 billion could not afford a healthy diet, despite a third consecutive year of improvement in global hunger.
IMMEDIATE EFFECT	The global system can produce and trade food while still failing to ensure that billions can reliably obtain adequate nutrition.
CONSEQUENCE FOR HUMANITY	Undernutrition and unaffordable healthy diets impair health, childhood development, learning, productivity and long-term economic opportunity.
INTERLOCKING / CASCADE EFFECT	Hunger is intensified by conflict, displacement, climate stress, debt and income shocks; in turn, persistent food insecurity can contribute to instability and deepen poverty.
TEU RELEVANCE	This supports the case for a minimum global human-development floor without requiring a single global economic ideology.
SYSTEM / CAUSE SOURCES	FAO — The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2026 FAO — Global hunger and healthy-diet affordability. 2026 release
HUMAN EFFECT SOURCES	WHO — Malnutrition: developmental, health and economic consequences

9. Trade fragments along geopolitical lines

STRUCTURAL CAUSE	States increasingly use tariffs, subsidies, export restrictions, technology controls and supply chains for strategic and national-security purposes.
OPERATIONAL FAILURE / EVIDENCE	WTO data show renewed trade fragmentation in 2025. Its 2026 World Trade Report models a geo-fragmented world in which geopolitical trading blocs could reduce long-run global GDP by 5.1% and exports by 18.6% versus baseline. These are scenarios, not forecasts.
IMMEDIATE EFFECT	Economic interdependence is replaced in part by bloc competition, duplication and restrictions that can reduce efficiency and market access.
CONSEQUENCE FOR HUMANITY	Poorer and smaller economies are especially exposed because weaker growth and trade can mean fewer jobs, lower incomes, higher prices and reduced public revenue.
INTERLOCKING / CASCADE EFFECT	Slower growth can worsen debt sustainability, reduce development finance and make it harder to fund climate adaptation, health, education and social protection.
TEU RELEVANCE	An Economic Union would seek rules that allow legitimate national policy while limiting mutually damaging fragmentation.
SYSTEM / CAUSE SOURCES	WTO — World Trade Report 2026: Executive Summary
HUMAN EFFECT SOURCES	WTO — Evidence on costs of geo-fragmentation and disproportionate losses for small economies

10. Artificial intelligence advances faster than global governance

STRUCTURAL CAUSE	AI capabilities and digital systems cross borders almost instantly, while regulation remains national and governments fear losing technological or strategic advantage if they impose stronger safeguards alone.
OPERATIONAL FAILURE / EVIDENCE	The UN Independent International Scientific Panel on AI warned in July 2026 that safeguards are not keeping pace with rapidly expanding capabilities. International arrangements remain at an early stage, and there is no universal binding system governing frontier AI risks across countries.
IMMEDIATE EFFECT	Governance lags behind the development and deployment of systems capable of affecting cyber networks, information, finance, biotechnology and autonomous technologies.
CONSEQUENCE FOR HUMANITY	Weak safeguards can expose societies to cross-border cyber disruption, manipulation, unsafe automated decision-making and other risks that no single country can fully contain.
INTERLOCKING / CASCADE EFFECT	AI can magnify existing security, economic and information-system vulnerabilities; competitive pressure may also produce a regulatory race in which collective safety is subordinated to strategic advantage.
TEU RELEVANCE	A genuinely global risk requires common scientific assessment, interoperable safeguards and accountable rules that reduce incentives for regulatory undercutting.
SYSTEM / CAUSE SOURCES	UN — Independent International Scientific Panel on AI: Preliminary Report
HUMAN EFFECT SOURCES	UN Secretary-General — AI can reshape economies, elections and security UN AI Panel — Current safeguards cannot keep pace with AI capabilities

The Human Consequence - A System of Cascading Risks

The central finding is that operational failures of global governance rarely remain confined to one policy silo. Their consequences travel through human systems. A security failure can become a humanitarian failure; a climate failure can become a food, migration and debt failure; an economic failure can become a health and education failure. This is why fragmented governance can produce cumulative harm even when individual institutions perform valuable work within their own mandates.

Illustrative cascade pathways

SYSTEM FAILURE	POTENTIAL HUMAN CASCADE
Conflict / weak peace mechanisms	Displacement → hunger and disease exposure → aid needs → fiscal pressure on host and origin countries
Climate governance gap	Extreme climate stress → crop and livelihood losses → food insecurity → migration / displacement → debt and development-finance pressure
Debt stress	Higher interest burden → less fiscal space → constrained health / education / resilience spending → greater vulnerability to future shocks
Trade fragmentation	Lower trade and growth → weaker jobs / incomes / public revenue → reduced capacity for development, climate and social protection spending
Aid retreat	Funding gaps → reduced health / development reach → greater domestic fiscal burden → slower progress in vulnerable states
Pandemic preparedness gap	Delayed collective response → health-system stress → trade and economic disruption → debt, poverty and learning losses
Nuclear / strategic rivalry	Arms competition → military and geopolitical tension → reduced trust → weaker cooperation on other global challenges
AI governance lag	Competitive deployment → weaker common safeguards → cross-border cyber / information / economic risks → pressure for further national controls and fragmentation
Fragmented commons governance	Uneven rules → environmental / resource / security disputes → cross-border costs → additional pressure on already fragmented institutions

The common structural cause

Across all ten cases, the recurring weakness is a mismatch between the scale of the problem and the scale of effective authority. Nations remain indispensable and legitimate, but many consequences are no longer containable within national borders. Existing international institutions can coordinate, advise, finance, negotiate and sometimes enforce sector-specific rules, yet their mandates, resources and democratic accountability often remain smaller than the problems they are being asked to manage.

What the evidence does - and does not - establish

The evidence establishes serious operational gaps and large human consequences. **It does not by itself prove that one new institution would automatically solve them, nor that every crisis is caused by weak global governance.** National policy failures, domestic inequality, conflict decisions, market forces and local institutions also matter. The case for the Earth Union therefore rests on a narrower proposition: where a problem is genuinely global and national action alone cannot reliably contain its consequences, humanity needs a more coherent, accountable and effective framework for collective action.

Conclusion

Humanity does not suffer from a lack of international organizations. **It suffers from a recurring inability to match global problems with global-scale responsibility, authority, financing and enforcement.** The ten warning signs show the consequences in different forms: underfunded development, weakened arms control, fragile peacekeeping, climate risk, incomplete pandemic preparedness, fragmented governance of the global commons, debt-driven erosion of public services, persistent hunger, trade fragmentation and lagging AI safeguards. Seen separately, each is a sectoral policy problem. Seen together, they reveal a systemic pattern: fragmented governance allows risks to cross borders and then cascade into one another. The human consequence is not abstract institutional inefficiency. It is greater exposure to war, displacement, hunger, disease, lost education, economic insecurity, environmental damage and technological risk. The Earth Union proposal does not begin by abolishing nations, cultures or legitimate national sovereignty. Its rationale is to explore a democratic constitutional framework through which humanity could exercise limited but binding authority only over those genuinely global problems that nations cannot solve independently - while leaving exclusively national matters to nations themselves.

C. Why an Earth Union? The Earth Union will tackle global challenges beyond the capacity of any single nation or institution.

(All figures below verified against these sources as on 15 September 2026).

1. **65 conflicts across 35 countries**
[PRIO — Conflict Trends: record number of state-based and interstate conflicts in 2025 \(June 2026\)](#)
2. **Organized-violence and battle-death figures:** 244,600 deaths from organized violence; 153,600 battle deaths. — [UCDP — Record number of conflicts between states \(June 2026\)](#)
[Journal of Peace Research — Organized violence 1989–2025 \(63:4, 705\)](#)
3. **Cost of violence - US\$21.8trn** - Twelfth consecutive deterioration.
[Institute for Economics and Peace — Global Peace Index 2026 —](#)

4. **12,187 nuclear warheads; 4,012 deployed**
5. [SIPRI Yearbook 2026 — nuclear forces and escalation risks \(June 2026\)](#)
6. **Military expenditure: US\$2,887bn; eleventh consecutive rise**
[SIPRI — Trends in world military expenditure, 2025 \(April 2026\)](#) —
7. **START treaty expired on 5 February 2026**
[Council on Foreign Relations — Nukes without limits: the end of New START](#) —
8. **92 autocracies, 87 democracies** - [V-Dem Institute — Democracy Report 2026](#) —
9. **Freedom in the world; twentieth year of decline** [Freedom House — Freedom in the World 2026](#) —
10. **Global Corruption Perceptions Index average score 42-**
[Transparency International — Corruption Perceptions Index 2025](#) —
11. **129 journalists killed** - [Committee to Protect Journalists — journalists killed in 2025](#)
12. **Press freedom at a 25-year low** - [Reporters Without Borders — 2026 World Press Freedom Index](#)
13. **126 transnational repression incidents in 2025-** [Freedom House — Transnational Repression 2026](#)
14. **Trust in public institutions - 39% high trust; 44% low or no trust**
[OECD — Government at a Glance 2025: trust in public institutions](#)
15. **Freedom on the net - fifteenth consecutive decline-** [Freedom House — Freedom on the Net 2025](#)
16. **AI-enabled cyber risk** — [World Economic Forum — Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2026](#)
17. **147 million conflict-driven food-insecure**
[Security Council Report — conflict and food insecurity \(2026\)](#) —
18. **Organized crime and homicide ~95,000 homicides a year**
[UN News — organized crime and homicide \(2026\)](#) —
19. **Plummeting peacekeeping troop numbers 78,633 personnel; -49% since 2016**
[SIPRI — Peacekeeping in peril: plummeting troop numbers \(2026\)](#) —
20. **Emerging AI governance machinery**
[United Nations — Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, preliminary report \(July 2026\)](#) —
21. **Limits of consensus diplomacy**
[NPR — COP30 climate talks end without a fossil-fuel roadmap \(November 2025\)](#)
22. **Women's representation — 27.5% of seats**
[Inter-Parliamentary Union — women's representation in parliament \(March 2026\)](#)
23. **Militarization of space**— [Secure World Foundation — Global Counterspace Capabilities 2026](#)
24. **117.8 million forced displacements**
[UNHCR — Global Trends: forced displacement at end-2025 \(June 2026\)](#)