For millions of years, since long before humans ever walked on Earth, the Arctic Ocean has been covered with ice and kept our planet cool, balancing weather patterns globally so that we have the food and resources we need to survive. It has always been a natural sanctuary, one our whole world needs now more than ever.

But today, there is 75% less Arctic sea ice in the summer than there was just 50 years ago. Exposed Arctic water now absorbs 90% of the sun’s heat. Parts of the Arctic Ocean are 4C too hot. In February 2018, temperatures at the North Pole soared above freezing in the sunless winter, for the first time in history. Scientists call what is happening in the Arctic a “death spiral”. The more the Arctic ice melts, the warmer our world gets. The warmer our world gets, the more the ice melts. This affects everything.

As the ice melts, the world’s weather patterns become unstable. Floods and droughts are on the rise, hitting hardest in vulnerable areas. A heating planet means water and hunger crises. Loss of polar ice is also contributing to sea level rise. At least 275 million people live in cities that are vulnerable to rising sea levels. If we don’t act now, sea level rise will redraw the map of the world and displace billions.

Business activity in the Arctic Ocean complicates the problem. Some business interests are treating the newly open waters like open season - seeking short term profit rather than investing in all life on Earth. It’s not just about oil and gas under the seabed, which scientists warn is off limits if we want to keep the world from heating up more than 2C. Commercial fishing vessels are starting to trawl there, damaging the seabed. And shipping companies are looking for routes through the Arctic now that the ice is melting. Large ships break up the ice, and their dirty fuel turns the ice dark so that it can’t reflect the sun’s heat, further accelerating the thaw.

The crisis we face today is massive. But there is an immediate and effective response. MAPS, the Marine Arctic Peace Sanctuary, protects the entire Arctic Ocean north of the Arctic Circle as the world’s largest peace park, stopping the exploitation that puts us all at risk. MAPS safeguards the vulnerable ecosystem that keeps our planet cool, and catalyzes a global shift to renewable energy. MAPS also encourages countries and businesses to pivot from short-term benefit for a few to supporting the long-term good of all.

To realize MAPS immediately, Parvati.org has created the MAPS Treaty as an addendum to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, translated it into the six official languages of the UN, and provided it to all 193 UN member states. We have brought it to COP 21, 22, 23 and 24 and UNGA 72 and 73, and UNEA 4. With the signatures of 99 countries, the MAPS Treaty enters into force. It has already been signed by Samoa and the Cook Islands and other countries are following suit. But we have little time before the ice runs out.
MAPS has been endorsed by a growing signmaps.org coalition that includes scientific luminaries like Dr. Jane Goodall, Dr. Sylvia Earle and Dr. Roger Payne. We are at a pivotal moment in human history. All life depends on a healthy Arctic Ocean. Please sign and share the MAPS petition at Parvati.org, and join us in the swift realization of the Marine Arctic Peace Sanctuary for the good of all.