

## Who should pay for Climate Damage?

The Hindu

Paper - III  
(Environment)

- ❖ Why is compensation against loss and damage due to changing weather events on the main agenda at COP27?
- ❖ What is the amount required to meet the world's climate goals?
- ❖ Where does India stand when it comes to global greenhouse gas emissions?

At the G-20 summit in Bali, rich nations including the U.S., Japan and Canada have pledged \$20 billion to wean Indonesia off coal. The U.S. and Japan have led the International Partners Group to mobilise funds from the public and private sector to support Indonesia's efforts to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. But a lot needs to be done, and in that context it is significant that at the ongoing Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Egypt, compensation against loss and damage due to climate change is finally on the main agenda, unlike previous years.

### Why is compensation critical?

Between 1900 and now, developed countries have benefitted from industrial development, which also led to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Developing countries were relatively late in starting out on economic development. They may contribute to emissions now, but that is a weak reason to ask them to stop economic development. A farmer in rural Africa can claim that his country has not added to emissions historically, but because of the U.S. or Russia's industrialisation, his agriculture yields are declining. Or an urban worker in South America has to work, without choice, in unforgiv-

### Paris Agreement:

- ➔ It is a legally binding international treaty on climate change.
- ➔ It was adopted by 196 countries at the Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris, 2015.
- ➔ **Goal:** Limit global warming to well below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels, and preferably to 1-5°C (one point five).

### United Nations Environment Program (UNEP):

- ➔ The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), established on June 05, 1972, is a major global environmental authority. Its headquarters are in Nairobi (Kenya).
- ➔ **Functions:** Its primary functions are to set the global environmental agenda, promote sustainable development within the United Nations system, and act as an authoritative advocate for global environmental protection.
- ➔ **Key Reports:** Emissions Gap Report, Global Environment Outlook, Frontiers, Invest in a Healthy Planet Report.
- ➔ **Major Campaigns:** 'Beat Pollution', 'UN75', World Environment Day, Wild for Life.

ing heat wave conditions caused by the developed world's emissions of the past. Therefore, options like financing the developing or underdeveloped countries by the developed world have been discussed. But as a popular newsletter Finshots asked, who decides who should pay whom and how much? Ourworldindata.org cites data from the Global Carbon Project to show that between 1751 and 2017, 47% of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions came from the U.S. and the EU-28. In total, just 29 countries.

### How badly their emissions hurt?

A paper published by Springer Link under the Climate Change umbrella earlier this year shows that emissions attributable to the U.S. over 1990-2014 caused losses that are concentrated around 1-2% of per capita GDP across nations in South America, Africa, and South and Southeast Asia, where temperature changes have likely impacted labour productivity and agricultural yields. But emissions may have also helped a few countries, such as those in Northern Europe and Canada. Moody's Analytics estimates that by the middle of the century, Canada would see a rise in GDP of 0.3% (about \$9 billion a year) as warmer climates spur agriculture and labour productivity. The Canadian Climate Institute cautioned that such a claim was not wholly true and that other factors must be considered. For example, climate change-spurred floods could cost Canada \$17 billion annually by 2050.

In these war of words, the only certainty is the fast-approaching calamity. The UN Environment Programme's annual emissions gap report for 2022 released late last month said the "international community is falling far short of the Paris goals, with no credible pathway to 1.5°C in place. Only an urgent system-wide transformation can avoid climate disaster the world must cut emissions by 45% to avoid global catastrophe."

### What about India's emissions?

The report says that India is among the top seven emitters (others being China, the EU-27, Indonesia, Brazil, the Russian Federation and the U.S.). These

## cop27

The United Nations Climate Change Conference 2022 — COP27 — opened in Sharm el-Sheikh (Egypt) with the aim of ensuring full implementation of the Paris Agreement adopted in 2015.

### Key points of COP27:

- ↳ **Global warming:** It has already touched 1 degrees Celsius
- ↳ Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe
- ↳ The current commitments and policies of different nations will lead to a temperature rise of 2.8 degrees by the end of this century.
- ↳ **Global warming:** To restrict global warming to 1.5 degree, carbon emissions must come down 45 per cent by 2030 and touch net zero by 2050.
- ↳ **Loss and damage:** COP27 includes 'loss and damage' in the main agenda.

### Loss and damage:

- ↳ It refers to costs the rich and developed countries, who are majorly responsible for industrial emissions, should pay to poorer nations (made negligible contribution to pollution) but are more vulnerable to extreme climate events For example: the devastating floods in Pakistan.
- ↳ **Polluter Pays" principle:** It makes the polluter liable for paying not just for the cost of remedial action, but also for compensating the victims of environmental damage caused by their actions.
- ↳ **Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss and Damages(2013):** It was the first formal acknowledgment of the need to compensate developing countries struck by climate disasters.

seven, plus international transport, accounted for 55% of global GHG emissions in 2020. Collectively, G-20 members are responsible for 75% of global GHG emissions.

If we seek economic development, some GHG emissions are unavoidable. But, put in the context of India's population, its emissions are far lesser per head, than for others. World average per capita GHG emissions were 6.3 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in 2020. The U.S. is way above this level at 14, followed by 13 in the Russian Federation and 9.7 in China. India remains far below the world average at 2.4.

In addition to last year's pledge of net-zero emissions by 2070, India has also committed to generate 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, bringing down emission intensity of GDP, as also raising forest cover. Last year, India was responsible for the wording of the agreement on coal. It was changed from "phase-out" to "phase-down" of coal — which reflects the country's ground realities of large energy requirements, met predominantly by thermal power, to spur economic development.

### **Now what next?**

In sum, the headlines that dominated the first week of the COP27 summit showed that there has been little sign of a concerted effort the world over to keep emissions low so as to retain global warming within the 1.5°C range.



### Expected Question

**Que. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international treaty drafted by?**

- (a) United Nations Conference on Human Environment, Stockholm, 1972
- (b) United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 1992
- (c) World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002
- (d) United Nations Climate Change Conference, Copenhagen, 2009

**Answer : B**

### Mains Expected Question & Format

**Que.: Discuss global warming and mention its effects on global climate. Discuss about the major countries increasing global warming and the efforts being made by them.**

**Answer Format :**

❖ **Introduction (30-40 words)**

Write about global warming.

❖ **Main Body (140-160 words)**

Write the effect of global warming and the countries which have contributed in it.

❖ **Conclusion (40-50 words)**

Discuss the efforts being made by the countries to stop global warming.

**Note:** - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC mains examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.