

### **"PM will attend Monday's high-profile special summit aimed at identifying concrete and urgent solutions, but India has said it is already doing its best — UN Secy Gen's new asks should be for developed nations."**

UN Secretary General António Guterres has convened a special Climate Action Summit on Monday, at the start of the annual General Assembly session, in a bid to nudge countries to do more to fight climate change. He has told world leaders to come with 'concrete' and 'realistic' proposals to enhance the actions that they are already taking.

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi is among several leaders due to attend the Secretary-General's meeting, India has already said it was in no position to upgrade its climate action plan. Instead, it has reminded the developed world that they have been woefully short of fulfilling their obligation of providing money and technology to developing countries to help them deal with the impacts of climate change.

#### **Why a special summit?**

This is not the first time that a special meeting on climate change is taking place on the sidelines of the General Assembly session. A similar meeting happened last year. But this year, the meeting has a bigger profile, with close to 60 heads of state or government, including France's President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, likely to attend.

But what makes this meeting different from earlier efforts is the intention of the Secretary-General not to let this become another talk shop. Bring concrete plans, not speeches, Guterres is reported to have told the world leaders in a letter inviting them for the meeting. More specifically, he has asked countries to bring their action plans in line with the objective of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent by 2030, and to "net zero" by 2050. In addition, he has also identified nine areas in which he would like the countries to do more.

#### **What are the climate action plans he is talking about?**

Under the 2015 Paris Agreement, every signatory nation is supposed to finalise and submit a set of time-bound actions that it would take to combat climate change. The first set of action plans, called nationally determined contributions or NDCs, was submitted in 2015. The Paris Agreement

also says that the NDCs should be updated every five years, with each subsequent NDC being stronger and more ambitious than the previous one.

As per the five-year cycle, countries have to submit their second NDCs by next year. But the Secretary-General is asking the countries to make specific additional commitments at Monday's meeting. In addition, he has also appealed to the countries to promise not to set up any new coal plants after 2020, stop subsidies on fossil fuels, and levy additional taxes on polluters. Importantly, he has asked all countries to commit to net zero emissions by 2050.

### **Why has India refused?**

India has said its NDC already represents its "best effort", keeping in mind its development imperatives. In a discussion paper released earlier this week, the government said the "new asks" from the Secretary-General, "in particular net zero emissions, mean a sweeping change across the entire economy". It has said this target should be kept only for developed countries.

"This can be a global aspirational goal and developed countries must be on track to take measures and legislate for net zero emissions by 2050. But it cannot be a goal for developing countries as the technologies have not progressed and aren't all available yet for developing countries. And the past performance on both finance and technology front is just not reassuring for them," it has said.

In the discussion paper, India has repeatedly called out the developed world for their failure to provide adequate finance and technology to developing countries. It has pointed out that the finance needs specified by the developing countries in their NDCs in 2015 adds up to \$4.4 trillion. India alone requires \$206 billion by 2030 to implement only the adaptation programmes in agriculture, forestry, water resources, and infrastructure. The total cost of carrying out all the promised actions in the NDCs would cost \$2.5 trillion by 2030.

What the developed countries have made available is meagre in comparison. Developed countries have promised to mobilise at least \$100 billion every year from 2020 for the developing countries. But even on that count, they are way behind the target as of now.

"As per latest data available of Climate Funds Update, the actual pledges from developed to developing countries for climate finance is around only \$30 billion, whereas deposits and approval are around \$26 billion and \$19 billion respectively," India has said.

It has said any call for climate actions at this stage "should should set in motion a serious discourse on climate finance required to take climate actions effectively".

India has said while it will continue to "do its best" on climate actions, it would not commit to any long-term goal, like a net-zero emission target for 2050, at this stage. Under the Paris Agreement, countries are supposed to undertake a stock-take of their actions in 2023 to see whether these were in line with the objective of keeping the global rise in temperature to below 2°C from the pre-industrial times.

"Given this, India will be better placed to consider a mid-term assessment of its actions and suitably recalibrate through re-examination and improvement when the global stocktake takes place in 2023. For the present, India may only be in a position to elaborate or clarify its post 2020 climate actions already pledged in its NDC," it has said.

## So, what is expected to come out of Monday's meeting then?

A new UN report just ahead of Monday's meeting says at least 112 countries had expressed their intent to revise their NDCs, with 75 of them promising to enhance its ambition. The other 37 have proposed to bring more data and information in their NDCs. In addition, at least 53 countries had said they were working to finalise long-term strategies, like a net-zero goal by 2050. Only 14 countries, together accounting for 26 per cent of global emissions, had categorically said they would not revise their NDCs.

Many countries are likely to make these announcements at Monday's meeting.

## GS World Team...

### United Nations General Assembly

#### Why in discussion?

- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said that the issue of climate change will be raised prominently when world leaders discuss public issues during the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly at the United Nations headquarters in New York.
- "We will pay special attention to the issue of climate change posing a threat to every person and object," the UN chief told reporters at a press conference on Wednesday.
- Guterres will host the 2019 Climate Action Summit at the United Nations headquarters in New York on 23 September to address the current climate challenges.
- Heads of countries and governments, high-level representatives of member states, and representatives of the private sector and Teen Age activist Greta Thunberg will consider measures to deal with the issue currently to be decisive by the United Nations.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the United Nations Climate Action Summit 2019 in New York on 23 September.

#### What is it?

- Its General Assembly, was established in 1945 under the United Nations Charter.
- The General Assembly works as a representative

body on issues such as deliberations and policy making in the United Nations.

- The UN General Assembly, made up of 192 members, provides an excellent forum for multidisciplinary and multilateral discussions on international issues covered under its charter.

#### Election of president

- The President of the House is elected three months before each session of the General Assembly. Till the year 2003, the Speaker was elected in the first conference of the session.
- For the first two weeks, general disputes continue, with each delegate after the Secretary-General and the Speaker being given the opportunity to speak in front of the House.

#### Functions of the General Assembly

- In 1940, the General Assembly set up an interim committee, called 'Minority Assembly', to redress the inaction of the League arising out of the prohibition exercise of permanent members of the 'United Nations Security Council'.
- During the prorogation of the General Assembly, the work of the General Assembly can be convened by the Ministers and the General Assembly can call a session. Accordingly, in the absence of a uniform vote on questions of peace and security in the Security Council, a special session of the General Assembly may be called on 24 hours' notice, which may propose collective measures and direct military action.

- The 'United Nations General Assembly' considered various complex problems of the world in previous years and took appropriate action on the question of Korea, Greece, Palestine, Spain etc.
- In 1959, the General Assembly was successful in stopping the invasion of Suez by Britain, France and Israel.

#### Main point

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will speak at this important UN meeting on the issue of climate change. Apart from this, he will also address the United Nations General Assembly.
- Union Minister Prakash Javadar gave this information in a press conference.
- During this, he said that the United Nations is going to have an important meeting on climate change.

- PM Modi will have two speeches in the United Nations, which are awaited by the whole world. The work that India has done in the field of climate change has gained a lot of popularity all over the world whether it is change in BS6 forest area increase.
- Representatives of the governments, private sector, civil society, local administrations and international organizations will participate in this conference and efforts will be made to find ambitious solutions in six areas: -
  - Moving to Renewable Energy Globally
  - Sustainable and strong infrastructure and cities
  - Sustainable agriculture
  - Management of forests and oceans
  - Strength and resilience to withstand the effects of climate change
  - Allocation of public and private financial resources
  - with a net zero carbon economy

#### Expected Questions (Prelims Exams)

1. Recently a special climate meeting conference was organized by the United Nations. Consider the statements related to this-
  1. In this conference, the idea was put by the UN Secretary-General to reduce the global greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030.
  2. It has the target to achieve net zero by 2050.
  3. Government of India stated that net zero emission targets should be set for developed countries only.
 Which of the above statements are correct?
 

(a) 1 and 2	(b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3	(d) 1, 2 and 3

#### Expected Questions (Mains Exams)

- Q.** Underline the importance of a special environmental meeting proposed under the auspices of the UN. Present an analysis of the attainment of India's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC). (250 Words)

**Note:** Answer of Prelims Expected Question given on 19 Sept. is 1 (c)