



Hot Air at Katowice

This article is related to General Studies-
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Key issues of concern for the poorest and developing nations were diluted or postponed.

“Until you start focussing on what needs to be done, rather than what is politically possible, there is no hope,” said Greta Thunberg, a 15-year-old activist from Sweden who shook the United Nations gathering at Katowice, Poland, with her plain speaking. But what she said should not happen is exactly what happened at the recently concluded 24th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. While there was some progress on the process by which the Paris Agreement of 2015 would be implemented, key issues of concern for the poorest and developing nations were diluted or postponed.

The 1.5 Degree Report, which was produced by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October 2018, showed that the earth is close to a climate catastrophe. This report was not suitably acknowledged as an evidence-based cause for alarm by the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Russia, however. These countries wanted the report “noted” but not “welcomed”. Arguments on word choices stalled the meeting at various stages, especially with the U.S. present with its large team of lawyers. While the U.S. is getting out of the Paris Agreement, formally by late 2020, it still took part in deciding (or rewriting) the rules for many agreed items of the Paris Agreement.

The summit aimed to establish guidelines for implementing and reporting on the Paris Agreement. Countries were looking to establish an enhanced transparency framework to monitor, verify and report actions taken in a systematic, standardised manner. As reported in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), all countries would carry out mitigation. But adaptation is a significant portion of many developing countries’ plans. Transparency — what would be done to reduce emissions, how countries would measure and report progress, and how much support industrialised countries would provide — was an important aspect of the discussions. This will inform stocktaking of progress on the Paris Agreement and how much more is needed to cut emissions and raise ambition.

Funds were also required from rich countries for the losses and damages borne by poor nations. While this meeting was not about loss and damage per se, this item will take greater precedence as warming effects intensify. Technology transfer and capacity building support are also issues of importance to vulnerable countries and poor, developing countries that need help to transition from high to low carbon economies.

Disregard of equity

There is little to no finance available for poor and developing nations. The details on funding and building capacity have been postponed. References to “equity” in the draft rule book were erased by the U.S. delegation, leaving one Indian negotiator to remark that they would have to go back to the original language of the Convention if differentiation between the developed and industrialised countries is purged from the text. Article 9 (the provision of financial support to developing countries from industrialised nations) was ignored; instead, there was an emphasis on carbon markets and insurance mechanisms. Finance was not even considered until the Africa Group of Nations forced open the issue by boycotting the discussions. Still, with name-calling from Switzerland and backtracking from the U.S., there was a lot of tension at the negotiations.

In spite of these problems, a single rulebook for all countries has been produced and will serve as a foundation for more detailed rules and structures. Many international civil society groups expressed utter dismay over the disregard of equity. Poor and developing countries whose greenhouse gas emissions have been low or negligible will bear the brunt of warming effects. Whether or not funds will be replenished even for the implementation of the current NDCs is unclear. Funds for finance, better terms for new technologies to be transferred to developing and vulnerable countries, and economic and non-economic support for loss and damage and their equitable moorings in the text have been eliminated, minimised or footnoted. Yet, the need for ‘ambition’ was loudly proclaimed by many actors. How can there be ambition without support?

Sowing confusion

One should remember that the European Union, Australia, Switzerland and Japan did not disagree with the U.S. when “equity” was wiped from the text; in fact, they consented. So, simply pointing to the U.S. as the ogre would be incorrect. And corporations have had a significant role to play in the drafting of the text in climate agreements. A Shell Corporation executive boasted recently about the role that the company had played in writing parts of the text of the Paris Agreement, especially Article 6, which is about market mechanisms and carbon credit. Text from the company’s straw proposal is part of the Agreement, according to The Intercept. American historian of science Naomi Oreskes and others have shown the methods by which those with vested interests have funded scientists and politicians to challenge climate change, thereby sowing confusion.

Local and state-level action that keeps climate change at the centre and fully incorporated into “good development” is the most critical policy perspective nations can adopt. As long as people and governments treat climate and environment as marginal to development, and well-being as marginal to GDP growth, climate change impacts will strain and tear every weak stitch of the world’s economic and development fabric.

There is hope in youth action in various parts of the globe, from Europe to Australia to the U.S. The farmers’ protests in India are but a symptom of a development-as-usual crucible gone wrong. Ms. Thunberg is not alone, and perhaps our strongest prospect is



to get behind this future generation. As she said: "If solutions within the system are so impossible to find, maybe we should change the system itself."

GS World Team...

COP-24

Why in the discussion

- ❑ Recently, the 24th Convention of the Parties (COP-24) of the United Nations Climate Change Framework (UNFCCC) concluded in Katowice City, of Poland.
- ❑ An Indian Pavilion was also organized in this conference which was inaugurated by Dr. Harshvardhan, Minister of Environment, Government of India.
- ❑ The theme of Indian Pavilion was "One World, One Sun, One Grid .
- ❑ World of India's leadership for activities related to global climate.
- ❑ In this sequence, this year, the United Nations gave India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi "Champion of the Earth Award".
- ❑ This award was given to him for the International Solar Alliance and for his determination to free India from plastics until 2022.

What is COP?

- ❑ COP is called a conference of parties related to the United Nations Climate Change Framework (UNFCCC).
- ❑ This institution ensures the implementation and review of the provisions of the UNFCCC.

What is UNFCCC?

- ❑ UNFCCC is an International Environmental Treaty which is applicable from March 21, 1994. Now, almost all the countries of the world have become member.
- ❑ By December 2015, it had 197 members.
- ❑ The purpose of this treaty is to prevent the menace of dangerous interference in the climate system by humans.

\$ 200 billion investment for climate change

References

- ❑ Recently, the World Bank has announced to increase investment in tackling the problem of climate change.
- ❑ According to the World Bank, for the year 2021-25 has been decided to double the funding to deal with the problem of climate change.
- ❑ The World Bank has announced this amount to be increased to \$ 200 billion.
- ❑ The World Bank has announced this amount to be increased to \$ 200 billion.
- ❑ The World Bank announced the doubling of the funds in the Summit of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- ❑ The World Bank issued statement said that approximately \$ 100 billion will be funded directly by the World Bank.
- ❑ Apart from this, the balance will be mobilized by two World Bank agencies.

Main Point

- ❑ To combat climate change, developed countries agreed to invest in developing countries.
- ❑ \$ 100 billion is to be given by the year 2020. \$ 48.5 billion in 2016 and \$ 56.7 billion in 2017 were given.
- ❑ The amount of 100 billion dollars out of 200 will be given by the World Bank. Apart from this, the remaining money will be mobilized with the World Bank's associated agencies.
- ❑ According to John Rume, senior director of the World Bank, if we fail to reduce emissions, then 10 million people will be in poverty by 2030.
- ❑ 13 million people have fled from Africa, South Asia and Latin America.
- ❑ To help reach the most affected areas of developing countries, the World Bank wants to make a framework.
- ❑ World Bank will invest in smart farming and water availability.

Expected Questions (Prelims Exams)

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| <p>1. Consider the following statement regarding 24th summit of conference of Parties of recently concluded United Nations Framework convention on Climate Change.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This year COP-24 was organised in Katowice city of Poland. 2. The purpose of this summit was to implement Paris Pact and establish directions for reporting. <p>Which of the above statements is/are not Incorrect?</p> <p>(a) Only 1 (b) Only 2</p> | <p>(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2</p> <p>2. 1.5 degree report released in October 2018 by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Which of the following countries did not accept it?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. China 2. U.S.A. 3. Saudi Arabia 4. Russia 5. Australia <p>Code:</p> <p>(a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3</p> <p>(c) 2, 3 and 4 (d) All of the above</p> |
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3. Who was awarded "Champion of the earth" by United Nations in relation to Climate Change recently?
- (a) Greta Thunberg (Sweden)
(b) Narendra Modi (India)
(c) Angela Merkel (Germany)
(d) Benjamin Netanyahu (Israel)
4. Consider the following statements regarding UNFCCC.
1. It is an international agreement related to climate which is in force since 21st March 1994.
2. The purpose of this agreement is to stop the detrimental interference by humans in climate.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) Only 1 (b) Only 2
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Expected Questions (Mains Exams)

Q.1:- Recently COP-24 summit was concluded regarding Climate Change. What do you understand by COP? Highlighting the objectives of COP-24, discuss the Indian effort regarding climate change
(250 Words)

Note: Answer of Prelims Expected Question given on 17 Dec. is 1.(d)

