



# UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE)

- The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (also known as the Stockholm Conference) was an international conference convened under United Nations auspices held in Stockholm, Sweden from June 5-16, 1972.
- It was the UN's first major conference on international environmental issues, and marked a turning point in the development of international environmental politics.
- The conference reflected a growing interest in conservation issues worldwide and laid the foundation for global environmental governance.
- The final declaration of the Stockholm Conference was an environmental manifesto that was a forceful statement of the finite nature of Earth's resources and the necessity for humanity to safeguard them.
- The Stockholm Conference also led to the creation of the **United Nations Environment Programme** (UNEP) in December 1972 to coordinate global efforts to promote sustainability and safeguard the natural environment.
- Documents created during the conference influenced international environmental law; one notable example was the final declaration, which elucidated 26 principles concerning the environment.
- The conference also produced the "Framework for Environmental Action," an action plan containing 109 specific recommendations related to human settlements, natural-resource management, pollution, educational and social aspects of the environment, development, and international organizations.
- Later in 1972, on 15 December, the General Assembly adopted a resolution designating **June 5 as World Environment Day** and urging "Governments and the organizations in the United Nations system to undertake on that day every year world-wide activities reaffirming their concern for the preservation and enhancement of the environment, with a view to deepening environmental awareness and to pursuing the determination expressed at the Conference." The date coincides with the first day of the landmark Conference.

# EARTH SUMMIT

- The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, the Rio Summit, the Rio Conference, and the Earth Summit (Portuguese: ECO92) was held in Rio de Janeiro from **3 to 14 June in 1992** was the first large international conference focused on global environmental questions since the 1972 UN meeting in Stockholm.
- The conference presented and introduced the concept of sustainable development as a strategy for the future to the world public, and developed the action program.
- The Earth Summit resulted in the following documents:
  - I. Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
  - II. Agenda 21
  - III. Forest Principles
  - IV. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
  - V. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

## The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development

- \* People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.
- \* Development today must not threaten the needs of present and future generations.
- \* Nations have the right to exploit their own resources, but without causing environmental damage beyond their borders.
- \* Environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process.
- \* Eradicating poverty and reducing disparities in living standards in different parts of the world are essential if we are to achieve sustainable development whilst meeting the needs of the majority of the people.
- \* Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens.
- \* The polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution.
- \* Sustainable development requires better scientific understanding of the problems. Nations should share knowledge and technologies to achieve the goal of sustainability.

## Agenda 21

- Agenda 21 is one of the major documents that came out of United Nations' Rio Summit on Environment and Development in 1992.
- It is a comprehensive plan of action, recommended by UN summit to be taken globally, nationally, and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, governments, and major groups in every area in which human impacts on the environment.
- Is the blueprint for sustainability in the 21st century.
- Provides options for combating the deterioration of land, air and water, whilst conserving habitats and their diversity.
- Deals with poverty, over consumption, health and education.
- Promotes roles for all. Everyone governments, business, trade unions, scientists, teachers, indigenous people and youth have roles to play in achieving sustainable development and should be involved in the decision making processes.
- Encourages the reduction of environmentally and socially detrimental processes, but within a framework which allows economic success.

## Principles of Forest Management

- All nations should take part in “the greening of the world” through planting and conserving forests.
- Forests should be managed in order to meet the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual needs of present and future generations.
- Unique examples of forest should be protected, for example ancient forests and forests with cultural, historical, spiritual and religious importance.
- Pollutants that harm forests should be controlled.
- Forestry plans should consider the non-economic values of forests and the environmental consequences of their management. Forest degradation should be avoided.

# The Convention on Biological Diversity

- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro on 5 June 1992 and entered into force on 29 December 1993.
  - To date, there are 193 Parties.
  - Components of biodiversity are all the various forms of life on Earth including ecosystems, animals, plants, fungi, microorganisms, and genetic diversity.
  - The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is an international legally-binding treaty with three main goals:
    - i. conservation of biodiversity;
    - ii. sustainable use of biodiversity;
    - iii. fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.Its overall objective is to encourage actions, which will lead to a sustainable future. With its three objectives, the CBD is often seen as the key international instrument for sustainable development.
  - The CBD's governing body is the Conference of the Parties (COP). This ultimate authority of all governments (or Parties) that have ratified the treaty meets every two years to review progress, set priorities and commit to work plans.
  - The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) is based in Montreal, Canada. Its main function is to assist governments in the implementation of the CBD and its programmes of work, to organize meetings, draft documents, and coordinate with other international organizations and collect and spread information.
- \* Ecosystems, species and genetic resources should be used for the benefit of humans, but in a way that does not lead to the decline of biodiversity.
- \* Substantial investments are required to conserve biodiversity, but it will bring significant environmental, economic and social benefits in return.
- \* The Ecosystem Approach, an integrated strategy for the management of resources, is the framework for action under the Convention.
- \* The precautionary principle states that where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat.

## The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was signed by about 150 countries in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 indicating widespread recognition that climate change is potentially a major threat to the world's environment and economic development.
- The ultimate objective of the Convention is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would not jeopardize climate.
- The Convention also requires all Parties to develop, periodically update, publish, and make available to the Conference of the Parties (COP) their national inventories of anthropogenic emissions of all greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol.

### **PARIS AGREEMENT**

- The Paris Agreement central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- Additionally, the agreement aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change.
- To reach these ambitious goals, appropriate financial flows, a new technology framework and an enhanced capacity building framework will be put in place, thus supporting action by developing countries and the most vulnerable countries, in line with their own national objectives.
- The Agreement also provides for enhanced transparency of action and support through a more robust transparency framework.
- The Paris Agreement entered into force on 4 November 2016, thirty days after the date on which at least 55 Parties to the Convention accounting in total for at least an estimated 55 % of the total global greenhouse gas emissions have deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the Depositary.

# THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)

- The full name of the treaty is the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction*.
- CWC is an arms control treaty which outlaws the production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons and their precursors and entered into force in 1997
- The convention opened for signature on January 13, 1993, and entered into force on April 29, 1997.
- The CWC is implemented by the **Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)**, which is headquartered in The Hague.
- The OPCW receives states-parties' declarations detailing chemical weapons-related activities or materials and relevant industrial activities. After receiving declarations, the OPCW inspects and monitors states-parties' facilities and activities that are relevant to the convention, to ensure compliance.
- The Chemical Weapons Convention prohibits:
  - \* Developing, producing, acquiring, stockpiling, or retaining chemical weapons.
  - \* The direct or indirect transfer of chemical weapons.
  - \* Chemical weapons use or military preparation for use.
  - \* Assisting, encouraging, or inducing other states to engage in CWC-prohibited activity.
  - \* The use of riot control agents "as a method of warfare."
- The CWC is open to all nations and currently has **193** states-parties.
- Four UN states are not party: Egypt, Israel, North Korea and South Sudan. Israel has signed but has yet to ratify the convention.
- A key non-signatory includes North Korea.
- Most recently, Palestine deposited its instrument of accession to the CWC.
- As of October 2016, about 93% of the world's declared stockpile of chemical weapons had been destroyed.
- If states-parties are found to have engaged in prohibited actions that could result in "serious damage" to the convention, the OPCW could recommend collective punitive measures to other states-parties. In cases of "particular gravity," the OPCW could bring the issue before the UN Security Council and General Assembly.

## **VIENNA CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE OZONE LAYER**

The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer is a multilateral environmental agreement signed in **1985** that provided frameworks for international reductions in the production of chlorofluorocarbons due to their contribution to the destruction of the ozone layer, resulting in an increased threat of skin cancer. It does not, however, require countries to take control actions to protect the ozone layer. This would come later in the form of the Montreal Protocol.

The Vienna Convention was the first convention of any kind to be signed by every country involved, taking effect in 1988 and reaching universal ratification in 2009.

The Convention aimed to promote cooperation among nations by exchanging information on the effects of human activities on the ozone layer.

Today, the Vienna Convention is still making progress. The countries involved meet once every three years to make decisions on important issues including on Research and Systematic observations as well as financial and administrative matters.

## **MONTREAL PROTOCOL**

- The Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer is a landmark international agreement designed to protect the stratospheric ozone layer.
- The treaty was originally signed in 1987 and substantially amended in 1990 and 1992.
- The Montreal Protocol stipulates that the production and consumption of compounds that deplete ozone in the stratosphere--chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), halons, carbon tetrachloride, and methyl chloroform--are to be phased out by 2000 (2005 for methyl chloroform).
- Scientific theory and evidence suggest that, once emitted to the atmosphere, these compounds could significantly deplete the stratospheric ozone layer that shields the planet from damaging UV-B radiation.
- The Montreal Protocol is the only universal UN Agreement, signed by 196 states and the EU. It has more signatories than any other international agreement or body, including the United Nations itself.
- The idea of using trade policy as a punishment mechanism: Due to this readily definable cause and effect relationship, the Montreal Protocol was able to establish strong enforcement provisions as well as strong commitments.

## **MONTREAL PROTOCOL contd...**

Positive outcomes of Montreal protocol:

- i. phase-out of 99 per cent of ozone-depleting chemicals in refrigerators, air-conditioners and many other products.
- ii. Scientific Assessment of Ozone Depletion completed in 2018, shows that, as a result, parts of the ozone layer have recovered at a rate of 1-3% per decade since 2000.
- iii. Ozone layer protection efforts have also contributed to the fight against climate change by averting an estimated 135 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions, from 1990 to 2010.

### **Kigali amendment**

- Given their zero impact on the depletion of the ozone layer, HFCs are currently used as replacements of hydro chlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), however they are powerful greenhouse gases. Therefore the Kigali Amendment aimed for the phase-down of hydro fluorocarbons (HFCs) by cutting their production and consumption.
- The goal is to achieve over 80% reduction in HFC consumption by 2047. The impact of the amendment will avoid up to 0.5 °C increase in global temperature by the end of the century.

### **What are the steps taken by India in the direction of Montreal Protocol?**

- India completely phased out production and consumption of Chlorofluorocarbons, carbon tetrachloride and halons, man-made chemicals responsible for the depletion of the Ozone Layer. This remarkable milestone was achieved two years ahead of schedule.

## KYOTO PROTOCOL

- The Kyoto Protocol operationalizes the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by committing industrialized countries to limit and reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions in accordance with agreed individual targets.
- The Kyoto Protocol only binds developed countries, and places a heavier burden on them under the principle of “common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities”, because it recognizes that they are largely responsible for the current high levels of GHG emissions in the atmosphere.
- It is an international treaty negotiated under UNFCCC.
- Adopted in 1997 in Kyoto, Japan. Came into force in 2005
- Parties : 192 (Canada withdrew)
- The Kyoto Protocol implemented the objective of the UNFCCC to fight global warming by reducing greenhouse gas concentrations
- The Protocol’s first commitment period started in 2008 and ended in 2012
- By 2008-2012, **Annex 1** countries have to reduce their GHG emissions by an average of 5% below their 1990 levels (for many countries, such as the EU member states, this corresponds to some 15% below their expected GHG emissions in 2008).
- A second commitment period was agreed on in 2012, known as the Doha Amendment to the protocol.
- The amendment includes new commitments for parties to the Protocol who agreed to take on commitments in a second commitment period and a revised list of GHGs to be reported on by Parties.
- India has ratified the second commitment period of Kyoto Protocol.
- Target under this protocol applies to following GHGs: Carbon Dioxide, Methane, Nitrous Oxide, Sulphur Hexafluoride , Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and Perfluorocarbons (PFCs)
- Kyoto Protocol includes “flexible mechanisms” which allow Annex 1 economies to meet their GHG targets by purchasing GHG emission reductions from elsewhere.

*Annex I Parties include the industrialized countries that were members of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) in 1992, plus countries with economies in transition (the EIT Parties), including the Russian Federation, the Baltic States, and several Central and Eastern European States*

# **UNEP: UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading environmental authority in the United Nations system.
- UNEP uses its expertise to strengthen environmental standards and practices while helping implement environmental obligations at the country, regional and global levels.
- UNEP's mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.
- UNEP acts as a catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to promote the wise use and sustainable development of the global environment. To accomplish this, UNEP works with a wide range of partners, including United Nations entities, international organizations, national governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society.
- It was founded as a result of the UN Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference) in 1972
- HQ : Nairobi, Kenya
- Its activities cover a wide range of issues regarding the atmosphere, marine and terrestrial ecosystems, environmental governance and green economy.
- UNEP has also been active in funding and implementing environment related development projects.
- UNEP has aided in the formulation of guidelines and treaties on issues such as the international trade in potentially harmful chemicals, transboundary air pollution, and contamination of international waterways
- UNEP is also one of several Implementing Agencies for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol
- UNEP re-organised its work programme into six strategic areas as part of its move to results based management. The selection of six areas of concentration was guided by scientific evidence, the UNEP mandate and priorities emerging from global and regional forums.

1. CLIMATE CHANGE UNEP

2. POST-CONFLICT AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

3. ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

4. ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

5. HARMFUL SUBSTANCES

6. RESOURCE EFFICIENCY/SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION.

## Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

- Also known as biosafety protocol
- Adopted in 2000; Came into force in 2003
- The Biosafety Protocol seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology.
- Genetically Modified Organisms can be regulated under this protocol

## Nagoya Protocol

- Adopted in Conference of Parties 10 (CoP10) (2010)
- It deals with access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity
- It is a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- The Strategic Plan consists of 20 new biodiversity targets for 2020, termed the 'Aichi Biodiversity Targets'

## Stockholm Convention

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants 2001 is a international agreement by the nations of the world to address the global chemical pollution. Its objective is to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants or POPs.

Signed 22 May 2001

Effective 17 May 2004

Signatories 152