

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) - UPSC Notes

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is an important programme under the United Nations. Such international bodies and programmes are very relevant for the [UPSC exam](#). In this article, you can read all about the UNEP, its functioning, mandate, objectives and India's relations with it.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

The UNEP is an international environmental authority engaged in establishing a global environmental agenda and promoting the efficient implementation of the environmental dimension of the United Nations Sustainable Development Programme.

- The rising pollution levels of the 1960s and 1970s prompted the international leadership to think about having laws and regulations in place for environmental concerns, along the likes of the International Labour Organisation ([ILO](#)), the world Health Organisation (WHO), etc.
- These concerns were addressed at the 1972 United Nations Conference on Human Environment (also known as the Stockholm Conference). The Conference led to the adoption of the Stockholm Declaration (Declaration on the Human Environment).
- The Conference also resulted in the formation of a management body for these concerns, which was later called the United Nations Environment Programme.
- Headquartered in Nairobi, the UNEP is headed by an Executive Director.

UPSC Prelims Facts for UNEP

UPSC Prelims Facts - UNEP



Name: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Year of formation: 1972

HQ: Nairobi, Kenya

Sector: Environment

Is India a member - Yes

UNEP Objectives

The UNEP's stated mission is to offer leadership and promote partnership in caring for the environment through informing, inspiring and enabling countries and peoples to enhance their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

The UNEP has a few focus areas, in which they prioritise work. They are:

1. Climate change
2. Ecosystem management
3. Disasters and conflicts
4. Environmental governance
5. Resource efficiency
6. Chemicals and waste
7. Environment under review

UNEP Functions

The major functions of the UNEP are discussed below:

- The UNEP engages in developing global conventions on the environment and related issues. It hosts the secretariats of various conventions such as:
 - [Minamata Convention](#)
 - Convention on Biological Diversity
 - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora ([CITES](#))
 - Basel Convention
 - Stockholm Convention
 - Rotterdam Convention
 - [Montreal Protocol](#)
 - Vienna Convention
 - Convention on Migratory Species
 - Tehran Convention
 - Bamako Convention
 - Carpathian Convention
 - Climate & Clean Air Coalition (CCAC)
- It promotes environmental science and related information.
- It finances and implements developmental projects related to the environment.
- It engages with national governments, NGOs, etc. in relation to environmental policy and implementation.
- The UNEP also formulates treaties and guidelines in the domain of international trade in harmful chemicals, international waterways pollution and transboundary pollution of air.
- It also awards and honours individuals as well as institutions that do stellar work in this field.

Major Programmes of the UNEP

- Earth Hour
- Clean up the World
- Billion Tree Campaign
- Seal the Deal
- Pain for the Planet
- Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at Local Level (APELL)
- TUNZA
- Faith for Earth

United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)

The UNEP's governing body is called the **United Nations Environment Assembly**, which is said to be the world's highest decision making body on environment.

- It meets once in two years to establish priorities for international environmental policies and develop international environmental law.
- Formed in 2012, it is headed by a Bureau and its President.
- The Bureau comprises ten environment ministers of various countries who all hold two-year terms, based on geographical rotation.
- Currently, it has 193 member states (all UN member countries).

UNEP and India

India has had a close relationship with the UNEP since the programme's inception. There are many projects completed, as well as ongoing projects, of the UNEP in India.

- The UNEP's presence in India started in 2016 with an office at New Delhi.
- The nodal agency for India's interactions with the UNEP is the GOI's Ministry for Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
- The Permanent Representative of India to UNEP is India's High Commissioner for Kenya.
- India's annual financial contribution to the UNEP is to the tune of USD 100,000.
- The UNEP has recognised India's initiatives in the environment sector.
 - The UNEP awarded PM Narendra Modi with the 'Champions of the Earth' award along with French President Emmanuel Macron in the category 'policy leadership'.
 - This was in recognition of the, among others, the [International Solar Alliance](#), initiated by India.
- In 2019, India joined the Climate & Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), whose Secretariat is hosted by the UNEP.
- India plans to work with CCAC nations on best practices and experiences for the effective implementation of the [National Clean Air Programme \(NCAP\)](#).

