

## AIR Spotlight - Challenges at COP-26 Summit

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the topic of discussion is the COP26 Summit of the UNFCCC.

### Participants:

- Dr. C. K. Varshney, Environmentalist
- Sanjay Jha, Journalist

### Context:

The 26th Conference of Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC is taking place between 31st October and 12th November 2021. The article will discuss the challenges to be discussed at the meeting by the developing countries including India.

### What is COP?

- COP stands for Conference of the Parties, and will be attended by countries that signed the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#) – a treaty agreed to in 1994.
- The COP26 event is a global [United Nations](#) summit about climate change and how countries are planning to tackle it.
- It was due to take place in Glasgow, Scotland in November last year with more than 200 world leaders due to attend, but it was delayed for a year because of the coronavirus pandemic.
- COP26 is now taking place in Glasgow and any decisions made could lead to big changes to our everyday lives.

### Background:

- In 2009, at the United Nations Climate Summit in Copenhagen, rich nations made a significant pledge.
- They promised to channel 100 billion dollars to less wealthy nations and developing countries by 2020 to help them adapt to climate change and mitigate the further rise in temperature.
- The focus has again turned to climate finance and countries are going to argue for more money to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

### Failure to meet the commitments:

- The developed countries were supposed to provide 100 billion dollars to developing countries to meet their adaptations as well as adopt means of carbon emission to maintain the temperature as per the [Paris climate agreement](#) that is below 2 degrees Celsius.
- This commitment has not been met and the developed countries are now dragging their feet on the issue. This is shaking the confidence of the global community about their seriousness with respect to their commitment as well as the implementation of their promises.

### Challenges for the developing countries:

### Finance as the major issue:

- The developed nations have not decided which country is going to contribute how much. It shows that they are less serious.
- 100 billion dollars for developing countries is a very minimal amount because if they have to confirm their energy use as per the Paris Agreement objective then trillions of dollars will be needed.
- If they would have completed their commitment, it would have given some kind of confidence and encouragement to provide more commitments to put on the table at Glasgow.
- Recently, Australia and Canada have announced that they will not be able to meet their 100 billion dollar commitment at Glasgow and this will only be made possible by 2023.
  - It means that there is going to be a delay of 3 years even for this 100 dollars, that is as it is minuscule for taking care of the aggressive commitments from the developed countries and global community.
- Negotiations will take place to raise more money after 2025 because 100 billion dollars is not enough for developing countries to cut the carbon emissions in their respective countries and also to help these countries achieve their national climate goals.
- There are three types of financing that are available – bilateral/multilateral, export credit, and private finance.
- The finance provided so far is of bilateral type with the multilateral finance component being very small. The rest of the finance is of export credit type which is not a grant or money that the developed countries have committed to providing but a borrowing kind of arrangement.
- There is a lot of difficulty in the accounting of money and, how they are going to be distributed is also not clear.

### Losses created due to climate change:

- The developing countries are suffering on account of the emissions that the developed countries have been doing so far.
- According to a recent report, India has suffered damages worth billions of dollars because of climate change in the form of floods, and other disasters.
- These calamities impair the infrastructure they have been able to create and also take up the lives and livelihoods of the people.
- Handling all these issues requires money and it can be seen that the developed countries are backtracking on their pledges.
- Unless these pledges are not adhered to, sincerity will not be achieved in creating the kind of climate that can contain global warming and mitigate climate change issues.

### India's stand on the issues:

- India is well aware of the fact that the issue of climate change requires immediate attention and that the biggest emitting countries have to change their lifestyle.
- They have to come forward and suggest how in a timely manner they are going to contain the emission of greenhouse gases in a very rigorous manner and in a very significant quantity.

- India has been continuously reiterating its efforts to mitigate climate change. Some of the examples are the [International Solar Alliance](#) which has now got the approval of the United Nations as well.
- India has also proposed '[One Sun, One World and One Grid](#)'. This kind of proposal requires commitment from other countries as it will have a great impact on reducing carbon emissions.
  - But, this will require capital investment and for that again finances are needed. Hence, countries should come forward with the necessary finance to get this proposal implemented.

#### India as the third-largest emitter:

- India is the third-largest carbon-emitting country but if we look at the overall figure then it contributes only 7 percent of the total carbon emissions.
- If we look at the per capita emission of carbon dioxide, then India is well below the global average.
- Even though the population of India is very large, India has not used any carbon space that other countries have already utilized and has left for other countries to make use of. Here, a question of 'carbon justice' also arises.
- Hence, India should reiterate these points if it is questioned at the meeting for being the third-largest carbon-emitting country.
- India should raise the point of deep cuts in the carbon emissions required to be made by the developed countries and about their promise of finances as well.

#### Way Forward:

- India welcomed the UK COP26 Presidency's five key initiatives on sustainable land use, energy transition, low emission vehicle transition, climate finance, and adaptation.
- India was also hoping to strengthen global climate initiatives including the International Solar Alliance, [Coalition Disaster Resilient Infrastructure \(CDRI\)](#), Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT Group), Call for Action on Adaptation and Resilience, and Mission Innovation.
- India has said it is "open to all options" provided it gets assurances that commitments in previous COPs such as developing countries getting compensated to the tune of \$100 billion annually, the carbon-credit markets being reinvigorated and the countries historically responsible for the climate crisis make compensations by way of "Loss and Damages," and clean development technologies be made available in ways that its industries can painlessly adapt to.

#### Conclusion:

It is expected that the rich nations will fulfill their commitments so that the world can become a safer and better place.

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