Bonn climate meet takeaways

Why in news?

The Bonn climate change conference that finished last week was built up as an opportunity for course correction, however, it underperformed.

What is the background of the issue?

- A massive and immediate scale-up in climate action is essential to keep alive any realistic chance of meeting the *1.5 degree or 2 degree Celsius targets*.
- Bonn was expected to act as the springboard for accelerated action.
- However, just like the more famous year-ending climate conferences, Bonn underperformed.
- Developed and developing countries bickered on issues old and new, and could not even agree on the agenda of one of the meetings till the penultimate day.

What is Global Stocktake (GST)?

- The countries did manage to wrap up, however, was the third and final round of technical discussions on global stocktake, or GST.
- **GST –** Mandated by the 2015 Paris Agreement, GST is an exercise aimed at assessing the progress in the fight against climate change.
- The GST helps in deciding ways and means to enhance global action to bridge the adequacy gap.
- The Paris Agreement says GST must be conducted every 5 years, starting in 2023.
- The actual meat in GST would come in at COP28, the year-ending climate conference, held in Dubai.
- The technical discussions just produced a short 'framework' on the elements to be included in the stocktake exercise.

What is the tussle between developing and developed countries?

- A bulk of the accumulated greenhouse gas emissions, the reason for global warming, have come from a group of about 40 rich and industrialised countries.
- Such countries are referred to as *Annex I countries under the 1992 UN Framework Convention* on Climate Change, or UNFCCC.
- This historical responsibility has been the basis for the *differentiated burden-sharing on developed and developing countries* in the climate change framework.

What is the argument of Australia?

- Australia issued a statement which downplayed the historical responsibility of the developed countries in causing global warming.

- Australia argued that the historical emissions happened at a time when there was no alternative to fossil fuel based energy sources.
- It argued the emissions happened when there was little understanding on the harm caused by greenhouse gases.
- It pointed out that since 1992, about 57% of the carbon dioxide emissions had come from *non-Annex I countries*.
- It said that 70% of the incremental warming since 1992 due to emissions from carbon dioxide, methane and sulphur dioxide had come from non-Annex I countries.
- Australia said that developed countries would take lead in climate action, however, it did not believe there was an unambiguous debt owed by the developed countries for past actions.

Do other countries have similar view point?

- The stand of Australia was similar to the one taken by the US at the start of the Bonn meeting.
- US said bridging the adequacy gap was not the sole responsibility of the developed nations and that it would not agree to references to pre-2020 commitments in the GST.
- Erasure of historical responsibility is the most sensitive *red line for developing countries*.

Why the money matters?

- Apart from GST, another mechanism was set up at *COP26 in Glasgow in 2021* for climate action.
- **MWP –** *Mitigation Work Programme (MWP)*, is a temporary emergency exercise focused only on increasing emission cuts.
- **IPCC –** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says global emissions have to come down by 43% from 2019 levels by 2030 to keep alive hopes of meeting the 1.5 degree target.
- **Monetary aid –** Most developing countries, including India, have said they would be able to act more if international support in the form of money and technology transfer was made available.
- **Tech transfer –** Developed countries are under an obligation to support the implementation of climate action plans of developing countries through money and tech transfers.
- However, money has been in perennial short supply and more funds are needed for all kinds of other purposes, the total estimated to be running in several trillions of dollars every year.

What is the way forward?

- A fresh effort at raising financial resources for climate change is being made in Paris.
- The Summit for a New Global Financial Pact is an attempt at redirecting global financial flows and raising new money to fight climate change.
- The Pact will also help in dealing with associated problems like biodiversity loss and poverty.

References

1. The Indian Express | Bonn climate meet takeaways
2. UNFCC | Bonn Climate Change Conference
3. UNEP | Bonn Climate Change Conference

