

COP30 - Concerns and Priorities of South Asia

Mains: *GS II - Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests*

Why in News?

Recently, the COP30 has begun to discuss the future climate goals and the concerns of south Asia is very crucial to discuss.

What is COP30?

- **COP** - UN Climate Change Conferences (or COPs) take place every year, and are the world's only multilateral decision-making forum on climate change that brings together almost every country on Earth.
- COP is where the world comes together to agree on the actions to address the climate crisis, such as:
 - Limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius
 - Helping vulnerable communities adapt to the effects of climate change
 - Achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.
- **Participants** - COP30 will bring together
 - World leaders and negotiators from the member states (or Parties) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with business leaders,
 - Young people,
 - Climate scientists,
 - Indigenous Peoples, and
 - Civil society
- They share insights and best practices to strengthen global, collective and inclusive climate action.
- **COP30** - It stands for the 30th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a landmark international treaty agreed in 1992, and parent treaty to the 2015 Paris Agreement
- It is taking place in Belém, Brazil from 10 to 21 November 2025.

What are the priorities and concerns of south Asia?

- **Implementation issues** - The gap between what is promised in action and finance, and what is delivered, is glaring.
- Whether it is in implementing the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) or delivering finance, the challenge remains.
- So far, only 65 countries have submitted enhanced NDCs.

- A recent study by the Council on Energy, Environment, and Water (CEEW) revealed that out of the 203 initiatives assessed (launched since 2015), approximately 5% of the initiatives have achieved their stated goals.
 - **Need** – There is a need for the Global South to harness regional cooperation to create impactful and targeted initiatives.
 - Climate pledges require robust governance, including a clear plan and timeline for reporting progress.
- **Regional cooperation** – Willing countries can, first, strengthen a regional forum to build a common stance and advance shared action that can be recognised at platforms such as:
 - The G-20
 - The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)
 - BRICS.
- Strengthen regional cooperation by sharing knowledge, aligning priorities and scaling technology solutions across borders.
 - **Model initiatives** – India’s Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and Nepal’s Sagarmatha Sambaad focused on mountain vulnerabilities, show how focused partnerships can advance both national and regional goals.
- According to the ADB, South Asia could experience an increase in days exceeding 35°C — from around 100 to approximately 200 annually — by 2100.
- The region-specific economic and non-economic impacts are diverse
 - Nepal’s glacial lake outburst flood,
 - Coastal threats in the Maldives,
 - India facing sweltering heatwaves,
 - Sri Lanka’s emerging drylands and water stress.
- Hence, governance structures should be inclusive, giving voice to the underrepresented, such as subnational governments, local communities and women.
- **Building trust** – The past is marred by delayed finances, broken promises and diluted commitments from developed countries.
- The current geopolitics is not conducive to an ambitious climate outcome.
- Further, an easy exit from a climate agreement not only leads to increased emissions but also undermines trust in the process.
- Analysis by the CEEW shows that developed countries are not on track to meet their 2030 NDC target.
- Hence, developed countries must fulfil their existing pledges and build momentum with ambitious NDCs aligned with 1.5°C, reinstating faith in multilateralism.
- **Streamlined financing** – Deliver climate finance that is
 - Predictable (sustainable funding),
 - Adequate (meets the needs and balanced with mitigation),
 - Fairly distributed
 - Accessible (easy, low-transaction cost access with priority for vulnerable countries),
 - Non-debt inducing (grants and highly concessional financing instruments).
- For this, the *Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T* (\$1.3 trillion) must be underpinned by clear pathways – who delivers, how much, by when, and with what accountability.

- Without clarity, the \$300 billion adaptation target by 2035 is meaningless.
- South Asian countries, particularly the Least Developed Countries, must call for a tripling of adaptation finance with operational clarity.
- Dedicated regional allocations from multilateral funds such as the Green Climate Fund, the Loss and Damage Fund, and the Adaptation Fund can simplify and amplify access to predictable finance.
- Most importantly, design and launch a '*South Asian resilience finance facility*' to mobilise and channel innovative finance to support domestic priorities and fast-track nature-based solutions.
- **Inclusion of non-state actors** - Non-state actors such as sub-national entities, the private sector, civil society, youth, academic institutions, as well as businesses can supplement state efforts toward enhancing ambition.
 - **The private sector** - Can unlock finance.
 - **Sub-national entities** - Can align with domestic goals and deliver.
 - **Civil society** - Can conduct independent assessments to expedite the process of bridging domestic capacity gaps regionally.
 - They can develop a regional compendium to share promising traditional knowledge, practices, and systems across the region.
 - **Youth** - Can mobilise urgency, innovation and intergenerational equity into climate solutions.
 - **Businesses** - Can mainstream sustainability into markets and value chains.
- If done rightly, it can reinforce a cycle of verified action that builds trust and accountability within the multilateral climate governance.
- **Technology flows** - Most of the South Asian countries are still largely excluded from international technology flows.
- A recent report by the CEEW shows less than one in three initiatives focus exclusively solely on Africa, Asia, or Latin America.
- Digital innovation, including artificial intelligence, big data, digital public infrastructure (DPI), blockchain and remote sensing, can unlock new forms of data cooperation and efficiency.

What lies ahead?

- The time for promises is now over and delivery will be the only currency of trust at COP30.
- That delivery must rest on three mutuals:
 - **Mutual clarity** (about responsibilities and pathways),
 - **Mutual cooperation** (that recognises both vulnerabilities and opportunities)
 - **Mutual implementation** (turning promises into practice, across borders and sectors).
- South Asia is leading, innovating and demanding that multilateralism be restored to credibility through delivery.

Reference

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