

Global Plastic Treaty

Why in news?

The fifth and final session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) is held in Busan, South Korea November 2024 to finalize a legally binding Global Plastic Treaty.

What is global plastic treaty?

- **About** - The global plastic treaty is a legally binding agreement aimed to combat plastic pollution in land and marine environments.
- **Goal** - End plastic pollution by 2040 by creating a circular economy for plastics.
- This means managing plastics responsibly throughout their lifecycle, from design and production to use and disposal.
- **Progress so far** - In March 2022, 175 countries agreed to develop a legally binding international agreement on plastic pollution.
- **Finalizing the treaty** - It is mandated by the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and is under negotiation by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) by 2024.
- **Expected Outcomes** - Banning or phasing out certain high-risk plastics, especially single-use items.
- Establishing design requirements for plastics to make them easier to recycle.
- Creating a framework for international cooperation to tackle plastic pollution.

Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee

- **Origin** - The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) was formed by UNEA through a resolution in 2022.
- **Objective** - The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) was tasked to draft a global treaty to address plastic pollution by 2024.
- **Four INC sessions** have been held since 2022 in Uruguay, France, Kenya and Canada.
- **Final session** - In Busan, South Korea (2024).
- **Key Areas of Negotiation** - Focus on the life cycle of plastics, including production, usage, and disposal.
 - Approve legally binding targets for recycling and reducing certain plastic products and additives.
 - Discussions on a just transition for workers impacted by reduced plastic production.

What is the need for a global plastic treaty?

- **Rising plastic production** - Global production doubled from 234 million tonnes (2000) to 460 million tonnes (2019).
 - It is expected to reach 700 million tonnes by 2040.
- **Waste and Pollution** - Plastic takes more than 200 years to decompose and the environment faces significant challenge as only less than 10% of global plastic has

been recycled.

India is the largest contributor to global plastic pollution, responsible for 20% of the world's plastic emissions, amounting to 9.3 million tonnes annually.

- **Micro plastic accumulation** - Globally 400 million tonnes of waste generated annually, with micro plastics polluting both land and ocean ecosystems.
- **Climate change connection** - Plastics contribute 3.6% of global greenhouse gas emissions (2020).
 - Emissions expected to rise by **20% by 2050** if current trends persist.
- **Health risks** - Plastic chemicals got mixed with food chain system and disrupt endocrine systems, cancer, reproductive disorders and cause severe health conditions.

What is the India's stance on the treaty?

- **Opposition to production caps** - India does not support restrictions on polymer production, considering it beyond the mandate of the UNEA's 2022 resolution in Nairobi.
- **Call for regulation of chemicals** - Advocates for decisions on harmful chemicals based on scientific studies, leaving regulation to domestic authorities.
- **Emphasize on phasing out plastic** - Recommends practical, nationally driven regulation of phased-out plastic items, accounting for local circumstances.
 - India has banned 19 categories of single-use plastics in 2022).
- **Need for safe waste management mechanism** - Formulate mechanism to assess and address infrastructure needs for effective waste management.
- **Financial and technical assistance** - Seeks inclusion of funding, technical support, and technology transfer in the treaty's provisions.

Multilateral Fund Proposed by India

- **Key features** - Modeled after the Montreal Protocol for ozone-depleting substances.
- Provides grant-based financing for **developing countries to transition to sustainable practices.**
- Funded by periodic replenishment from developed countries and private contributions.
- **Governance structure** - Subsidiary body with equal representation from developed and developing countries.
- Responsible for operational policies, guidelines and resource disbursement.
- **Focus areas** - Technology transfer to developing nations.
- Support for incremental costs related to treaty compliance.

What lies ahead?

- Finalize the global treaty by negotiating with all parties in 5th INC session.
- Reach consensus on production caps and financial mechanisms.
- Ensure inclusivity and equitable participation of all nations.
- Establish robust monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.
- Mobilizing resources for effective implementation, especially in developing countries.

Reference

1. [The Indian Express |Why The World Needs a Global Plastic Treaty?](#)
2. [Business Standard | India Proposes Fund to Fight Plastic Pollution](#)

