Historical Climate Responsibility – India's Position at COP31

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Why in News?

At the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) to the UNFCCC in Antalya, Türkiye, India reiterated the principle of historical climate responsibility and called for an open, transparent and equitable Second Global Stocktake, alongside accountability for climate finance and technology transfer.

- **Historical Climate Responsibility** – It refers to the argument that countries which industrialised earlier have contributed a disproportionately large share of cumulative greenhouse-gas emissions and therefore have greater responsibility to lead climate action and support developing countries.
- It is closely linked to the UNFCCC principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC).
- CBDR-RC recognises that climate change is a common concern, but countries have different historical contributions, capabilities and national circumstances.
- **CBDR-RC** – The principle is embedded in the UNFCCC and remains central to climate negotiations under the Paris Agreement.
- **Common responsibility** – All countries have a role in addressing climate change.
- **Differentiated responsibility** – The nature and extent of obligations should reflect differing contributions to the problem and differing capabilities.
- **Respective capabilities** – Countries' financial, technological and institutional capacities are relevant when determining the level and form of action.

Global Climate Stocktake (GST)

- **GST** – A periodic assessment under the Paris Agreement of collective progress towards achieving its purpose and long-term goals, conducted every five years.
- **Purpose** – To assess collective progress, identify gaps and inform countries as they update and strengthen their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- **First GST** – Concluded at COP28 in Dubai in 2023.
- **Second GST (GST-2)** – India has called for an open, transparent, inclusive and equitable process, based on the best available science and a comprehensive assessment of implementation gaps.

India's Position at COP31

- **Equity & climate justice** – Climate action should reflect historical responsibility and the principle of CBDR-RC.
- **Climate finance** – India has emphasised that developed countries must fulfil their finance obligations under Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement. It has called for finance that is predictable, largely public and concessional, and does not add to developing countries' debt burden.
- **Technology transfer** – India has called for addressing barriers arising from cost, intellectual property rights (IPR) and trade so that developing countries can access relevant technologies.
- **Party-driven process** – India has argued that mitigation and the Global Stocktake should remain facilitative and non-punitive, respecting the nationally determined character of NDCs.
- **Adaptation & just transition** – India has highlighted adaptation finance, food security, livelihoods of small and marginal farmers, affordable energy access and the right to development.
- **Coalitions –** India indicated cooperation with G-77 and China, the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) and BASIC.

Reference

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