

Key Outcomes of 7th GEF Summit

Why in news?

Recently, the 7th assembly of Global Environment Facility (GEF) was conducted in Vancouver, Canada.

What is Global Environment Facility (GEF)?

- **About** - It is the largest source of multilateral funding for biodiversity globally, and distributes more than 1 billion dollar a year on average to address inter-related environmental challenges.
- **Origin** - GEF was originated by *France with a 1989* proposal to formulate financing responses to mounting concern over global environmental problems.
- It was established as a pilot program in 1991 through arrangements between 3 implementing agencies,
 - World Bank
 - UN Development Programme (UNDP)
 - UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
- **Purpose**- To provide *concessionary and additional funding* for the incremental costs of achieving global environmental benefits, with an initial endowment of around USD 1 billion.
- **Evolution** - In 1992, GEF was established.
- By 1994, the GEF became a separate institution, *hosted but not administered by the World Bank*, which operates as a key mechanism for global environment
- **Functions**- It provides fund for biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, persistent organic pollutants (POPs), mercury, sustainable forest management, food security, and sustainable cities in developing countries.
- It has served as an operating entity of the financial mechanism since the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC), 1994*.
- **Special Funds**- The special funds set up and managed by the GEF are
 - **The Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)** - It supports adaptation and technology transfer in all developing country parties to the UNFCCC, supporting both long-term and short-term adaptation activities in water resources management, land management, agriculture etc.,
 - **The Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF)** - It is established under the UNFCCC to address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) that are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change.
- **Adaptation Fund** - GEF provides the secretarial services to adaptation fund which was established under the *Kyoto Protocol* in 2001.

The Kyoto Protocol aims to limit or reduce the greenhouse gas emissions by 3 market-based mechanisms - emissions trading, clean development mechanism and joint implementation.



What are the financing mechanisms of GEF?

- The GEF provides funding to assist developing countries in meeting the objectives of international environmental conventions. It serves as a "financial mechanism" to 5 conventions.
- **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**- It is a multilateral treaty established in Rio Earth summit 1992.
- It has three main goals-
 - Conservation of biological diversity
 - Sustainable use of its components
 - The fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.
- **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**- It is an international environmental treaty to combat dangerous human interference with the climate system, by stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.
- It was established in 1992 Rio Earth summit.
- Kyoto Protocol was the implementation of measures under UNFCCC.
- **Stockholm Convention**- It is an international environmental treaty, signed in 2001 to eliminate or restrict the production and use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs).
- **UN Convention to Combat Desertification**- It is a convention to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought through national action programs.
- It is the only convention stemming from a direct recommendation of the Rio Conference's Agenda 21, and adopted in 1994.
- **Minamata Convention on Mercury**- It is an international treaty designed to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds.
- It was adopted in 2013 at a diplomatic conference held in Kumamoto, Japan.
- **Montreal Protocol**- It is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production of numerous substances that are responsible for ozone depletion which entered into force in 1989.
- GEF is *not formally linked* to this protocol, but supports implementation of the protocol in economies in transition.
- **Multilateral agreements**- It is associated with many global and regional multilateral agreements that deal with international waters or transboundary water systems.
 - The Global Ship Ballast Water Treaty
 - The UN Law of the Sea Treaty
 - The MARPOL treaty for shipping (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution From Ships)
 - The UN Agreement on conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) which aspires to collect \$100 billion financing target by 2020, was launched in 2010. It is managed independently.

What are the key outcomes of the 7th GEF Assembly?

- **Global Biodiversity Framework Fund** - It ratified the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund, a new source of funding for protecting endangered species and their ecosystems globally, which was approved by the GEF Council.
- **Youth Leaders Learning Exchange**- It stressed the importance of universal access to education for girls and boys, and engaging youth, women, and Indigenous leaders in sustainable solutions.
- **Indigenous and Local Knowledge Event**- It is organised to study the overlap between indigenous peoples' lands and biodiversity hotspots.
 - It emphasized the importance of oral history and the voices of indigenous peoples in Arctic and Amazon.
- **GEF Partnership Forum**- It is the 1st ever GEF Partnership Forum, which created a space for indigenous peoples, youth, women, and representatives from civil society to discuss ways the GEF can support their recognition and empowerment.
- **Intergenerational Fireside Chat**- This event discussed the devastation of recent and ongoing wildfires as well as the role of fire as a place for gathering, connecting, and storytelling.
- **Forum Confabs**- It is an informal gathering that were held during the Partnership Event.
 - **Intergenerational Collaboration for our Future**- It discussed how the GEF Partnership should engage youth on a long term basis.
 - **Women's Leadership in Environmental Action**- It seeks elaboration on women's leadership and gender-responsive actions in environmental programs and initiatives.
 - **Indigenous Stewardship of the Global Environment**- It discussed the GEF's support in harnessing indigenous knowledge systems and the importance of working in a holistic manner to elevate the rights of indigenous people.
- **Inclusive GEF Assembly Challenge Program**- It is a new funding initiative providing up to USD 100,000 to each of 23 winners.
- **Net Zero Nature-positive World**- It discussed the role of international finance institutions in supporting countries raising ambition in climate and nature.

References

1. [IISD- GEF 7th assembly summary report](#)
2. [GEF- About Global Environment Facility](#)



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