Mitigating a Crisis: COP 26 Glasgow

What is the issue?

The Heads of state from at least 120 countries are expected to convene in Glasgow for the 26th meeting of the United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP).

What is the COP 26 about?

- COP26 is the 26th iteration of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- This year, the meeting will be held in Glasgow, UK.
- The UK will share the presidency with Italy.

Why is COP26 important?

- This year's COP is the most significant climate meeting since 2015, when the Paris Agreement was launched.
- A first version of the guidelines known as the 'rulebook' was worked out in past meetings, but so far countries have been unable to agree on important points.
- At the meeting, countries will also be expected to raise their climate ambitions, updating the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

What points of the rulebook are still under debate?

- **Carbon Markets** - Developing countries, particularly India, China and Brazil, gained significantly from the carbon market under CDMof Kyoto Protocol.
- India registered 1,703 projects under CDM which is the second highest in the world.
- The ratification of the Paris Agreement would change the scenario of carbon markets.
    1. Targets for developing countries
    2. CDM transition
    3. Accounting rules

4. Share of Proceeds (SOP) to the Adaptation Fund

are the major problems to be dicussed regarding carbon markets.

- **Emission cut pledges-** In 2015, countries have agreed to cut GHG emissions to 2 degrees Celsius and ideally 1.5 degree Celsius.
- The deadline for countries to make steeper emission cut pledges is this year and major emitters like China and India have not yet come forward with strengthened NDCs.
- **Fossil Fuels -** The UN has called upon the OECD countries to phase out coal by 2030 but environment ministers from G20 economies have not agreed on a timeline.
- **Finance-** Developed countries pledged to raise $100 billion per year till 2020 to assist developing countries in dealing with the effects of climate change but it has not yet been achieved.
- **Net zero –** The issue of net-zero or carbon neutrality was not mentioned in the Paris Agreement.
- More than 50 countries have pledged to carbon-neutrality by middle of the century. China has said it would achieve this status by 2060
- Several other developing countries including India have also been resisting such targets as developed countries are responsible for over 75% of accumulated atmospheric GHGs.

IPCC AR6 emphasised that to keep temperature rise within 1.5°C, global emissions should be reduced by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, on the way to net zero 2050.

- **2030 targets-** The IPCC has called for 2030 emissions to be 45% less from 2010 levels for the 1.5°C goal.
- Several countries have not yet updated their NDC targets and the report calls for a significant increase in the level of ambition of NDCs" till 2030.

What has to be the focus for India at COP 26?

India is ranked as the world's third largest emitter. It emits 7% of global emissions but the per-capita emissions are far below the global average.

- COP26 must focus sharply on reducing emissions till 2030, rather than on net zero 2050 which is too distant.

- India can raise its NDC pledge of reducing Emissions Intensity by 33-35% from 2005 levels by 2030 to 38-40%.
- India could also offer to achieve the carbon neutrality by 2070-75 by invoking Common but Differentiated Responsibility.

References

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