Summit of the Future

Why in News?

United Nations Summit of the Future was held at New York between 22-23 September 2024.

What is Summit of the Future?

- It is a high-level event, bringing world leaders together to forge a new international consensus on better future.
- **Theme** - 'Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow'.
- **Aim of the summit**
  - Accelerate efforts to meet our existing international commitments.
  - Take concrete steps to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.
- **Outcome** - The Summit concluded with the adoption of an outcome document - A ***Pact for the Future***, along with two annexes, ***Global Digital Compact*** and ***A Declaration on Future Generations***.
- **Pact for the Future** – It is an inter-governmentally negotiated, action-oriented Pact covering both new areas and issues on which agreement has not been possible in decades.
- **GLOBAL DIGITAL COMPACT** – It is the first comprehensive global framework for digital cooperation.
- It explicitly includes human rights and concrete commitments to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda and puts emphasis on the role of non-state stakeholders.
- Commitment to Digital public goods, Digital public infrastructure, Open-source data, Models and standards and Data governance.
- Aiming at ***Global AI Governance***, establishment of
  - AI Scientific Panel
  - Global policy dialogue on AI
  - Global Fund for AI capacity building.
- Make the digital space safer for all through greater accountability of tech companies and social media platforms and actions to tackle disinformation and online harms.
- **DECLARATION ON FUTURE GENERATIONS** – It put forward concrete proposals and processes to help Member States better consider future generations and inspire long-term anticipatory governance at the international level.
- **Follow up events**
  - High-level review for the Global Digital Compact in 2027
  - High-level plenary meeting in 2028 for the Declaration on Future Generations
  - Heads of State and Government meeting at the beginning of the 83rd session of the General Assembly in 2028 for a comprehensive review of the Pact for the Future.
  - 4th International Conference on Financing for Development

- 2nd World Summit for Social Development.

What are provisions of the pact on sustainable development and financing?

- **2030 Agenda** - Accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration.
- Advance sustainable development beyond 2030.
- Finance for the SDGs and close the SDG financing gap, including through an SDG Stimulus.
- **Tax Cooperation** - Inclusive and effective international tax cooperation
- Global minimum level of taxation on high-net-worth individuals.
- **Climate Change** – Endorsed the need to keep global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- Transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems to achieve net-zero emissions in 2050.
- Promote disaster risk-informed approaches to sustainable development.
- **Environment** - Promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Conclusion of a legally-binding agreement on plastic pollution
- Reversing biodiversity loss and protecting ecosystems
- Increased adequate, predictable and sustainable funding for the UN Resident Coordinator System.

What are provisions of the pact on international peace and security?

- **Sustaining peace** - Ensure National whole-of-society sustaining peace efforts through the development and implementation of voluntary national prevention strategies.
- **Protecting civilians** - Pledged to refrain from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.
- Strengthen accountability for serious crimes and gross violations such as gender-based violence and starvation as a weapon of war.
- **Humanitarian assistance** - Increase the use of innovative and anticipatory financing mechanisms to eliminate famine.
- Accelerate the implementation of commitments on Women and Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security.
- Review of United Nations peace operations to recommend how they can adapt to new and emerging challenges
- **Counter Terrorism** - Address all drivers and enablers of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, including in the digital sphere.
- Prevent and combat transnational organized crime, including cybercrime.
- **Nuclear Disarmament** - Recommitment to nuclear disarmament in nearly 15 years, through a clear commitment to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.
- **Avoid weaponization of emerging technologies** - Commitment to prevent an arms race in outer space
- Discussions on an instrument to govern the use and development lethal autonomous weapon systems
- Continued assessment of risks around the military applications of AI.

What are provisions of the pact on science, technology and innovation (STI) and digital cooperation?

- **Reduce global disparities in STI** - Addresses barriers to the access, participation and leadership of women and girls in these areas.
- Ensure human rights and ethical principles in the development and use of new technologies.
- Increased use of science in policy-making to address complex challenges.
- Provide more funding for SDG-related research and innovation.
- **Youth** - Expand and strengthen youth participation in global decision-making, including in UN intergovernmental bodies and processes.
- Participation of youth from developing countries, facilitated through the UN Youth Fund.

What are provisions of the pact on transforming global governance?

- The Pact resolved to make the multilateral system more effective, fit for the future, just and representative, inclusive and networked, and financially stable
- **UN Security Council Reform** - Commitment to increase the representation of developing countries, recognizing the special case of Africa.
- **Gender equality** - Revitalization of the Commission on the Status of Women.
- **Human Rights** - Ensure the enjoyment by all of all human rights, including through UN human rights mechanisms and protect human rights defenders.
- **International financial architecture** - Stronger participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making.
- Mobilization of more financing from multilateral development banks to help developing countries turbocharge their development needs.
- Review the sovereign debt architecture to ensure that developing countries can borrow sustainably to invest in their future.
- Strengthen global financial safety net to support countries in the event of financial and economic shocks, using special drawing rights.
- Delivering more finance to help countries address climate change and invest in adaptation and renewable energy
- **Outer Space Governance** - Strengthen the existing international frameworks to ensure that all countries can benefit from its safe and sustainable exploration and use.

What are the issues with the pact?

- **Not Unanimous** - Russia, Iran, North Korea, Belarus, Syria and Nicaragua rejected the pact demanding changes in national sovereignty and the role of external entities in domestic affairs.
- **No Means of Implementation** - Pact for the Future is packed with lofty goals and commitments but is thin on actual, realistic steps.
- The new pact does not spell out how the body plans to get members to follow its rules.
- **No UNSC reform** - The Summit did not agree to a clear pathway for Security Council reform and has called for categories of members.
- **Trust issue** - Effective global cooperation is increasingly critical to our survival but difficult to achieve in an atmosphere of mistrust.

- **Outdated Structures** - Using outdated structures that no longer reflect today's political and economic realities , hampers the progress.
- **Dominance of G7** – Dominance of the developed countries in the provisions of the pact.
- No mention of how speeding up reforms the Global South has been demanding for years.

What lies ahead?

- Create clear procedure on implementing the aims and objectives.
- Make concrete targets to achieve in due time framework.
- Include the demands of Global South and reform of UNSC.

References

1. United Nations | Summit for the Future
2. The Hindu | Global Inequality

