The Green New Deal

Why in news?

US has proposed the Green New Deal (GND) to address both climate change and economic inequality.

What is Green New Deal?

- The Green New Deal is a four-part program for moving America quickly out of crisis into a secure, sustainable future.
- The Green New Deal audaciously aspires to make sweeping changes to the environment and economy and meet all of the U.S.'s power demand from clean, renewable and zero emission energy sources by 2030, while at the same time addressing racial and economic justice.
- Thus, in many ways, it is more than just a climate change plan.
- The resolution acknowledges the 1.5° report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the U.S. Fourth National Climate Assessment.
- It identifies the worldwide effects from warming, the disproportionate responsibility borne by the U.S. as a result of its historical emissions, and calls for the country to step up as a global leader.

What are the progressive agendas of the deal?

- The deal speaks about the fall in life expectancy, economic stagnation, erosion of workers' rights, and rising inequality in the U.S. Climate change that will asymmetrically affect the most vulnerable sections of U.S. society and ought to be considered a direct threat to national security.
- The deal claims that it is the responsibility of the federal government to create a Green New Deal, which would meet its power demand through renewable sources in 10 years.
- It also calls for a 10-year national mobilization that would build infrastructure, eliminate pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, as much as is technologically feasible, and reduce risks posed by the impacts of climate change.
- These goals entail dramatic changes in manufacturing, electricity generation, education, livelihoods, sustainable farming, food systems, and an overhaul of transportation, waste management, health care, and strong pollution-control measures.

- The resolution also calls for international action by the U.S. on climate change.
- It recognizes that public funds would be needed for these changes and need to be leveraged.
- It states that the federal government needs to take the full social and environmental costs of climate change into consideration through new laws, policies and program.
- Importantly, the Green New Deal calls for a federal jobs guarantee for all, many details of the proposal still need to be worked out.

What is the response for the deal?

- The deal has been called “ridiculous” by some Republicans and has made some Democratic leaders uneasy as well.
- But various progressive elected officials, groups, and some activists have lent their support.
- Almost all Democrats who have announced their candidacy for the 2020 election have backed the resolution.
- One does not know if this appetite for the deal will be sustained, but if extreme events related to climate change continue, people are likely to view radical change as essential.

What lies ahead?

- How far this resolution will go and whether and how it will be diluted in the U.S. Congress is unclear.
- It should be noted that until now no U.S. agency or civil society group has publicly acknowledged the responsibility of the country for its historical emissions.
- The Green New Deal is the sort of resolution the U.S. should have passed after the Kyoto Protocol in 1997.
- Instead, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed the Byrd-Hagel Resolution, according to which the U.S. ought not to be a signatory to any protocol or agreement regarding the United Nations Climate Convention that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Green New Deal is welcoming in this regard, it is seen as an acknowledgement by politicians that economic growth, the environment and social well-being go together.
- If this spreads to many more countries, it can help apply pressure on governments and the fossil fuel industry and create a bottom-up movement led by the youth for major changes in dealing with climate change.

Source: The Hindu

