UN Biodiversity Summit

Why in news?

The first-ever UN Summit on Biodiversity was convened in New York.

What happened in the Summit?

- The theme of the Summit is "Urgent action on biodiversity for sustainable development."
- The member-nations of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) took note of the link between biodiversity loss and the spread of animal pathogens.
- They called for an end to destructive industrial and commercial practices.
- There is consensus that conservation targets set a decade ago in Aichi, Japan, to be achieved by 2020, have spectacularly failed.

What are the targets that weren't achieved?

- Evidence is presented by the latest UN Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 report: none of the 20 targets has been fully met.
- Many countries have ignored the connection between biodiversity and well-being.
- They have depleted ecological capital in pursuit of financial prosperity.
- Among the Aichi targets that fell by the wayside are those on,
    1. Reform or phasing out of subsidies that erode biodiversity,
    2. Steps for resource use within safe ecological limits,
    3. Preventing industrial fisheries from destroying threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems, and
    4. An end to pollution, including growing plastic waste.
- A bright spot is the partial progress made on **protecting surface and subsurface water**, inland, coastal and marine areas.

What does WWF index reveal?

- The losses appear even starker from WWF's Living Planet Index.
- The index points to precipitous declines in vertebrate populations, a key indicator, by 68% over 1970 levels.
- There is a fast-erosion of the ecosystem health.
- The 196 CBD member-countries must chart a greener course, aligning it with

the Paris Agreement.

What was India's message?

- At the summit, India's message was one of pride in an ancient conservation tradition, as one of the few mega diverse countries.
- India's message recognised the value of nature as much as the destructive impact of unregulated resources exploitation.

What is the concern?

- National laws of the 1970s and 1980s have shielded islands of biodiversity, particularly in about 5% of India's land designated as protected areas.
- But they are now seen as irritants to speedy extraction of natural resources.
- In this hurry, due process is sought to be dispensed with, as envisaged by the new EIA norms proposed by the NDA government.
- There is little concern for indigenous communities that have fostered biodiversity.
- No effort to make these communities strong partners in improving the health of forests and buffer zones.

What could be done?

- Now that CBD members are set to draw up fresh conservation targets to be finalised next year, India too has an opportunity.
- India could plan a trajectory of green growth after Covid-19.
- This plan should be around clean energy, ecological agriculture, a freeze on expansion of mining and dam-building, resource recovery from waste, and regeneration of arid lands.
- It should join the coalition of the enlightened.

Source: The Hindu

Quick Fact

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

- The CBD entered into force in December 1993.
- Its three main objectives are:
    1. the conservation of biological diversity,
    2. the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity,
    3. the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.



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