

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.

Organizational Structure of GEF

GEF Assembly

It is the main guiding structure for GEF, which has been convened 7 times between 1998 and 2023 comprising 185 member governments. It meets every 4 years and is and is responsible for reviewing and ratifying recommendations

GEF Council

It is the GEF's main governing body, comprising of 32 members appointed by constituencies of GEF member countries. It meets twice annually, develops, adopts and evaluates the operational policies and programs for GEF-financed activities.

Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP)

It was established in 1995 to provide independent advice to the GEF on its work as well as assistance in the delivery of Members' responsibilities.

Independent Evaluation Office (IEO)

It was created in 2003 and supports the improvement of accountability and learning in GEF strategies and operations through its evaluations.

Secretariat

It is based in Washington, D.C., and reports directly to the GEF Council and Assembly.

Trustee

The World Bank serves as the GEF Trustee, administering the GEF Trust Fund (contributions by donors).

Agencies

The GEF Agencies are the operational arm of the GEF that work closely with project proponents.

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](#)