



Plastic Pollution Treaty Negotiations

Published On: 05-12-2024

Why in news?

The fifth session of negotiations for a **legally binding treaty on plastic pollution** has concluded without finalizing the treaty. The treaty, mandated by a **2022 UN Environment Assembly resolution**, aims to address the full life cycle of plastic, including its production, design, and disposal.

Factors Leading to Non-Finalization of the Treaty:

1. Production Capping:

- **European Union, Latin American, and African** countries demanded caps on plastic production.
- This proposal was opposed by **India and China**, who resisted measures limiting the production of primary plastic polymers.

1. Unclear Definitions:

- The draft treaty contained unclear language on the elimination of certain plastic chemicals and products.
- While the draft defined **plastic** and **plastic products**, it failed to clearly define terms like **microplastics**, **nanoplastics**, **primary plastic polymers**, and **recycling**.

India's Stance:

1. Impact on Development:

- India expressed concerns that regulating the production of primary plastic polymers would hinder the **development rights** of nations, especially developing economies.

1. Scope of the Instrument:

- India argued that the treaty should focus specifically on addressing **plastic pollution** without overlapping with the mandates of other existing **multilateral environmental agreements**.

1. Phase-Out Period:

- India did not support including specific **phase-out dates** for plastic chemicals and products at this stage of negotiations.

1. Assistance for Developing Countries:

- India emphasized the need for **financial** and **technical assistance**, including **technology transfer** to developing countries, to help them address plastic pollution effectively.

Plastic Pollution:

1. Global Plastic Production:

- Over **460 million metric tons** of plastic are produced globally each year.
- **19-23 million tonnes** of plastic waste end up in aquatic ecosystems annually, contributing significantly to pollution.

1. Implications for Ecosystems and Livelihoods:

- Plastic pollution can harm ecosystems, reduce their ability to adapt to **climate change**, and threaten **livelihoods, food production, and social well-being** of millions of people.

1. Link with Climate Change:

- Approximately **98%** of single-use plastic products are made from fossil fuels, contributing to **greenhouse gas emissions** and exacerbating climate change.

The ongoing negotiations highlight the complex global challenges involved in tackling plastic pollution, with various countries balancing environmental concerns with development priorities.