



Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee: UNEP

For Prelims: Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, [UNEP](#), [UNEA](#), [Minamata Convention](#), [Plastic Pollution](#), [EPR](#).

For Mains: Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

Why in News?

Recently, the [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#) has gathered in Paris, France, for the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-2).

- The first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-1) concluded in Uruguay in 2022.
- INC-2 aimed **to set the stage** for negotiations on the substance of a global deal to **end plastic pollution** to edge closer to protecting ecosystems, species and humanity from the grave impacts of the linear plastics economy.

What are the Key Highlights of INC-2 Meeting?

- The **primary agenda of INC-2** was to **adopt the rules of procedure**. The rules govern various aspects such as the negotiation process, decision-making procedures (consensus or voting), and the entities authorized to make decisions.
- During the previous INC-1 meeting, a part of **Rule 37**, stating "each member shall have one vote," was kept in brackets, **indicating unresolved disagreement**.
 - The bracketed part now includes **provisions from the [Minamata Convention](#)**, allowing **regional economic integration organizations (such as the European Union) to vote on behalf of their member states**. However, the member states must be present during voting or as part of the committee.
- **India has consistently insisted on bracketing Rule 38**, which states, "The Committee shall make every effort to reach agreement on all matters of substance by consensus."
 - **If all efforts to reach consensus have been exhausted** and no agreement has been reached, the decision shall, as a last resort, **be taken by a two-thirds majority of the representatives of Members** who are present and voting."
- The formation of the OEWG (Open-Ended Working Group) has delayed the start of discussions in the contact groups on substantive matters.
 - In UNEA resolution 5/14, the assembly mandated **an ad hoc open-ended working group (OEWG)** to lay the groundwork for negotiations.

What is the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee (INC)?

- **About:**
 - The INC was established in February 2022, at the 5th session of the [United Nations Environment Assembly \(UNEA-5.2\)](#).
 - A historic resolution (5/14) was adopted **to develop an international legally binding**

instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment with the ambition to complete the negotiations by the end of 2024.

- **Need:**
 - The rapidly increasing levels of plastic pollution represent a serious global environmental issue that **negatively impacts the environmental, social, economic and health** dimensions of sustainable development.
 - In the absence of necessary interventions, the amount of plastic waste entering **aquatic ecosystems could nearly triple** from some 9-14 million tonnes per year in 2016 to a projected **23-37 million tons per year by 2040**.
- **Objective:**
 - Under the legally binding agreement, **countries will be expected to develop, implement and update national action** plans reflecting country-driven approaches to contribute to the objectives of the instrument.
 - They will be **expected to promote national action plans** to work towards the **prevention, reduction and elimination of plastic pollution** and to support regional and international cooperation.

What is the United Nations Environment Assembly?

- It is the governing body of the **UN Environment Programme**.
- It is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment.
- The Assembly is made up of the **193 UN Member States** and convenes every two years to advance global environmental governance.
- It was created in **June 2012**, during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also referred to as RIO+20.

What are the Initiatives to tackle Plastic Pollution?

- **Indian:**
 - [Plastic Waste Management \(Amendment\) Rules, 2022](#)
 - [Extended Producer Responsibility \(EPR\)](#)
 - [National Dashboard on Elimination of Single Use Plastic and Plastic Waste Management](#)
 - [India Plastics Pact](#)
 - [Project REPLAN](#)
- **Global:**
 - [European Union' Directive on Single-Use Plastics](#)
 - [Closing the loop.](#)
 - [The Global Tourism Plastics initiative](#)

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