



## Mains Practice Question

Q. Explain the significance of climate diplomacy for India. (250 words)

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### Approach

- Briefly define climate diplomacy.
- Explain its significance for India.
- Give conclusion.

### Introduction

- Climate diplomacy is the practice and process of creating the international climate change regime and ensuring its effective operation.
- Climate diplomacy is evolving in scope and complexity as the climate regime shifts its focus to implementation and climate risk management.
- To deal with the internal and external challenges to success, climate diplomacy must draw on the best practice of modern diplomacy and also innovate new approaches.

### Body

**Significance** of climate diplomacy for India:

- **Climate Vulnerability:** India, given its emerging power status and high vulnerability to climate impacts, holds a key position in global climate action.
  - Geographically and ecologically, India is highly exposed to risks such as flooding, drought and extreme heat, and is among the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
- **Climate diplomacy provides opportunity for India, an aspiring global leader, to become a responsible player in climate action.** Both for its sheer size and its position as an emerging economic power, India is an important actor in climate action.
  - While its historical greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and therefore responsibility for climate change, have been low, its current emissions are on a steep rise and are projected to continue on the same trajectory in the coming years.
  - At the global level, climate negotiations have offered a forum for India to use diplomatic leverage to pursue its interests.
- **Economic and political gain:** India also has the potential to gain economically and politically from some of the measures that are being developed to mitigate climate change, **such as sustainable energy production.** Climate policy can also be placed in the context of a wider shift in Indian foreign policy towards a more active global engagement.
- **Strategic gains:** India has a great potential to gain leverage and promote its global strategic interests through climate governance.
- **Responsible player in the Indo-Pacific region:** India, being a climate-vulnerable country and a key player in the Indo-Pacific region, is well-poised to launch climate diplomacy at the regional

level.

- **Enhancing its sphere of influence:** India can strengthen its influence in developing countries through climate financing and other kinds of support for development.
- **Food security:** Climate-resilient agriculture can be pushed by India in its bilateral and multilateral dialogues. Encouraging trade in sustainable agricultural products can create a demand for the same and can also help address the issue of global food security.
- **Trade:** Economic engagements in climate supporting technologies, for instance in the renewable energy sector, can promote climate change conscious global trade.

## India's Actions regarding Climate Diplomacy

- India has used climate policies to gain leverage. It has sought to incorporate the **geostrategic uses of climate change** into a wider shift in its foreign policy.
- Globally, India has chosen a cooperative strategy to emphasise its responsibility through diplomacy and sustainable energy investments, in the process contributing to its role as a global power and widening its influence in partner countries.
- It has tried to prove its leadership role in the Climate Domain by launching **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** in 2015, a flagship for India's enhanced climate engagement.
- In COP21 in Paris in 2015, India accepted 1.5 degrees Celsius as a target limit for the increase in the global average temperature and announced an ambitious domestic renewable energy programme.
  - It is progressing impressively towards its pledged **INDCs** (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions) in the Paris Deal.
  - According to United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP's) '**Emissions Gap Report, 2019**', **India is among the few countries that are on track to meeting their Paris commitments.**
  - India's INDCs:
    - To reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35 percent by 2030 from 2005 levels.
    - To achieve about 40 percent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy resources by 2030, with the help of transfer of technology and low cost international finance, including from Green Climate Fund.
    - To create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.

## Conclusion

The application of diplomacy to climate change is critical to embedding climate change in decision-making processes to shape and reframe the core national interest at home and influence debates in other countries. It is important for India to prioritize climate change as one of the instruments of its foreign policy. Besides being significant to India's core national interest of sustainable development, climate diplomacy provides a good platform for India to prove its global leadership position.