Clean air initiative

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***Source**: The Hindu*

Manifest pedagogy: Taking the deaths caused by air pollution into account, its commitment to clean air is on top priority for India. Hence, air pollution becomes a hot topic for Civil Services Exam. Any fact or initiative at national level and global level becomes important.

In news: UN has launched Clean air initiative which calls on national and subnational governments to commit to achieving air quality that is safe for citizens.

Placing it in syllabus: Environmental conservation strategies

Dimensions:

- Clean air initiative
- Climate Action Summit
- WHO ambient air quality guideline values

Content: Clean air initiative:

Ahead of the upcoming 2019 Climate Action Summit, the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) and Climate and Clean Air Coalition has announced the "Clean Air Initiative", calling on governments at all levels to join the Initiative. The "Clean Air Initiative" calls on national and subnational governments to commit to achieving air quality that is safe for citizens, and to align climate change and air pollution policies by 2030.

Governments at all levels can join the Clean Air Initiative by committing to specific actions, including:

- Implementing air quality and climate change policies

that will achieve the WHO Ambient Air Quality Guideline values.
- Implementing e-mobility and sustainable mobility policies and actions with the aim of making a decisive impact on road transport emissions.
- Assessing the number of lives that are saved, the health gains in children and other vulnerable groups, and the avoided financial costs to health systems that result from implementing their policies.
- Tracking progress, sharing experiences and best practices through an international network supported by the Breathelife Action Platform.

The Clean Air Initiative is a vital opportunity to connect experts across environment and health and support governments to develop bold policies that can avert the climate crisis and improve lives around the world. The Initiative is expected to lead to numerous co-benefits.

- Improving air quality by developing e-mobility will lower healthcare costs, while reducing environmental damage and alleviating health symptoms caused by noise levels from conventional transport.
- Transport options, such as cycling and walking, will increase physical activity and help prevent diseases like diabetes and lung cancer.
- Governments have the opportunity to advance climate and health goals and the SDGs at the same time.

((The **Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (CCAC)** was launched by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and six countries – Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Mexico, Sweden, and the United States – on 16 February 2012. The CCAC aims to catalyze rapid reductions in short-lived climate pollutants to protect human health, agriculture and the environment. India has formally joined the Climate & Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), becoming the 65th country to join the partnership.))

Climate Action Summit,2019:

The UN is calling all the states to participate in Climate Action Summit in New York on 23 September with concrete, realistic plans to enhance their nationally determined contributions by 2020, in line with reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent over the next decade, and net zero emissions by 2050.

The Summit will bring together governments, the private sector, civil society, local authorities and other international organizations to develop ambitious solutions in **six areas**:

1. global transition to renewable energy;
2. sustainable and resilient infrastructures and cities;
3. sustainable agriculture;
4. management of forests and oceans;
5. resilience and adaptation to climate impacts;
6. alignment of public and private finance with a net zero economy.

The UN Secretary-General has prioritized the action portfolios, which are recognized as having high potential to curb greenhouse gas emissions and increased global action on adaptation and resilience.

- **Finance**: mobilizing public and private sources of finance to drive decarbonization of all priority sectors and advance resilience;
- **Energy Transition:** accelerating the shift away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy, as well as making significant gains in energy efficiency;
- **Industry Transition**: transforming industries such as Oil and Gas, Steel, Cement, Chemicals and Information Technology;
- **Nature-Based Solutions:** Reducing emissions, increasing sink capacity and enhancing resilience within and across

forestry, agriculture, oceans and food systems, including through biodiversity conservation, leveraging supply chains and technology;

- **Cities and Local Action:** Advancing mitigation and resilience at urban and local levels, with a focus on new commitments on low-emission buildings, mass transport and urban infrastructure; and resilience for the urban poor;
- **Resilience and Adaptation:** advancing global efforts to address and manage the impacts and risks of climate change, particularly in those communities and nations most vulnerable.

WHO ambient air quality guideline values:

The 2005 WHO Air quality guidelines offer global guidance on thresholds and limits for key air pollutants that pose health risks. The Guidelines indicate that by reducing particulate matter (PM10) pollution from 70 to 20 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m), we can cut air pollution-related deaths by around 15%.

WHO Air Quality Guideline values

Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)

- 10 µg/m3 annual mean
- 25 µg/m3 24-hour mean

Coarse Particulate Matter (PM10)

- 20 µg/m3 annual mean
- 50 µg/m3 24-hour mean

Ozone (O3)

- 100 µg/m3 8-hour mean

Nitrogen dioxide (NO2)

- 40 µg/m3 annual mean

- 200 µg/m3 1-hour mean

Sulfur dioxide (SO2)

- 20 µg/m3 24-hour mean
- 500 µg/m3 10-minute mean