

# Living Lands Charter

June 29, 2022

**In news**– Commonwealth leaders have officially adopted the Living Lands Charter which commits all its member countries to safeguarding global land resources – as well as taking coordinated action on climate change, biodiversity loss, and sustainable land management.

## What does the Living Lands Charter mean?

- It is the **non-binding charter that mandates member countries to safeguard global land resources and arrest land degradation** while acting against climate change, biodiversity loss and towards sustainable management.
- It was announced on June 25, 2022 at the conclusion of the 2022 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kigali.
- **The Charter helps to encapsulate the combined effort to hold the global average temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.**
- With this they **have agreed to voluntarily dedicate a 'living land' in their respective countries** to future generations, in line with **the strategy set for the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.**
- **More than a third of land has been degraded in the last two decades** and recognised that the vulnerabilities of the ecosystems to land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change are closely interrelated and need to be considered collectively.
- **It aimed to support member countries to effectively deliver their commitments under the three Rio conventions** such as UN Convention on Biological Diversity, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- The leaders recognised that this requires “rapid, deep and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions”, including reducing global carbon dioxide

emissions by 45 per cent by 2030 relative to the 2010 level and to net-zero around mid-century, as well as deep reductions in other greenhouse gases.

- They called on developed countries to fully deliver on the \$100 billion goal urgently and through to 2025 and emphasised the importance of transparency in the implementation of their pledges.

## **Commonwealth-**

- The Commonwealth is an association of countries across the world.
- Although historically connected to the British Empire, any country can apply to be a member of the Commonwealth, regardless of its intersection with Britain's colonial past.
- **The Commonwealth comprises 56 countries, across all inhabited continents.**
- The members have a combined population of 2.4 billion people, almost a third of the world population, with 1.4 billion living in India, and 94% living in either Asia or Africa.
- In terms of area, the Commonwealth holds about one-fourth of the world's land area.
- After India, the next-largest Commonwealth countries by population are Pakistan (227 million), Nigeria (213 million), Bangladesh (167 million), and the United Kingdom (68 million).
- Tuvalu is the smallest member, with about 12,000 people.

## **The timeline of the Commonwealth:**

- 1887 – Lord Rosebery describes the British Empire as the Commonwealth of Nations.
- 1926 – Balfour Declaration at the Imperial Conference.
- 1931 – Statute of Westminster.
- Post World War II – the British Empire was dismantled.

- 1947- India gained independence.
- 1949 – Ireland becomes a Republic (Republic of Ireland) and leaves the Commonwealth.
- 1950 – London Declaration, where members accepted that the head of the Commonwealth will be the British Monarch and the Commonwealth of Nations is officially established.
- 1965 – Commonwealth Secretariat is established. It is the main intergovernmental agency and its central institution.