

UN declares access to clean, healthy environment as universal human right

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In news– United Nations (UN) in a historic resolution has recently declared that every person on the planet has the right to live in a clean, healthy environment.

About the declaration-

- The UN resolution has underlined that Climate change and environmental degradation are the most critical threats awaiting humanity in the future.
- The newly recognised right will be crucial to tackling the **triple planetary crisis**. This refers to the three main interlinked environmental threats that humanity currently faces: **climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss** – all mentioned in the text of the resolution.
- The landmark development demonstrates that the member states can unite in the collective fight against the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.
- **The resolution will help to reduce environmental injustices and protection gaps.**
- **The declaration sheds light on almost all the rights connected to the health of our environment.**
- This right was not included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. So, this is a historic resolution that will change the very nature of international human rights law
- Some 50 years ago (in 1972), the **United Nations Conference on the Environment in Stockholm concluded with a resolution** placing environmental issues at the global forefront.

What the world did after Stockholm

Major environmental conferences, treaties and disasters



- The 1972 conference ended with its own historic declaration, was the **first one to place environmental issues at the forefront of international concerns and marked the start of a dialogue between industrialized and developing countries** on the link between economic growth, the pollution of the air, water and the ocean, and the well-being of people around the world.
- UN Member States back then, declared that people have a fundamental right to **“an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being,”** calling for concrete action and the recognition of this right.
- Today, over 176 countries have adopted environmental framework laws on the basis of it. From a foothold in the 1972 Stockholm Declaration, these rights have been integrated into constitutions, national laws and regional agreements.
- **In October 2021, it was recognised by the UN Human Rights Council.**
- **July 28, 2010, the UN general assembly recognised the right to water and sanitation through its resolution.** It stated that clean drinking water and sanitation “are essential to the realisation of all human rights”.
- **The declaration (on right to a healthy environment) was adopted by over 160 UN member nations, including India, is not legally binding.**
- But, it will encourage countries to incorporate the

right to a healthy environment in national constitutions and regional treaties.

- **Russia and Iran abstained from voting.**