
International Treaties And Conferences On The Issue Of Environment

Pooja

LLB & LLM

H. No. 190 A, Sector-4, Rohtak (HR)

ABSTRACT: Today the issue of environment is the most vital and burning issue in contemporary world because whole world has been facing severe crisis of environmental degradation. Therefore, customary law and general principles relating to the environment, such as the 'precautionary principle' and sustainable development, are evolving but it is arguable whether any have yet become normative rules. The speed with which awareness of global environmental problems has reached the international political agenda has meant that customary law has tended to take second place to treaty law in the evolution of legal norms, and treaties have been the main method by which the international community has responded to the need to regulate activities which threaten the environment. There are hundreds of bilateral and multilateral environmental treaties creating states' rights and obligations. The UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development have negotiated many of these treaties. The challenge of environmental crisis is toughest one before the entire world and it must be addressed collectively to slowdown the dangers of this crisis to save ecosystem of the earth. This crisis is fatal and dangerous not only to human beings but also animals and even to entire living being on this earth. The issue of environment is very vast and wider. It includes all the factors which are responsible and determinant for the degradation of our ecosystem. Therefore, to protect the environment so many efforts have been made at the global level including Kyoto Protocol, Johannesburg Summit, Rio+20 Summit etc. The present research paper highlights some global efforts to protect the environment in the changing scenario of climate and global warming.

KEYWORDS: UNEP, Stockholm Conference, NPT, Climate Change, Global Efforts.

INTRODUCTION: The fact is that the most important aspect of life is environment and atmosphere surrounding the earth. The quality life of all living organism on this earth

depends on the quality of environment and atmosphere. The human being as the master of all species created several structures to make life better and exploited the natural resources provided by nature on this earth, space and the sea. Although the human being as an intelligent creature created various means of comforts for luxurious life but ruthlessly exploited the natural resources in this process and this ruthless exploitation has become a danger to human civilisation itself in form of environmental pollution and degradation which is most serious concern for the health and life of human civilisation. So the issue of environmental pollution has become the most serious issue for the entire world and must be addressed immediately to save this earth and all living creatures on this earth. The United Nations Organisation has played a significant role in addressing this most important issue before the world. It organised several conventions and conferences to understand and to resolve this serious and dangerous issue.

Global Efforts: It is a well-known fact that the leaders, scientists and social activists from all over the world are conscious and aware about the forthcoming dangers of environmental pollution and can foresee the future repercussions not only for human civilisation but for all living organism on this earth. Now the need of the hour is to address this critical issue at international platform to save humanity. The problem of environmental degradation is manmade problem. Technological advancement has further accelerated this problem. Although all nations are responsible for polluting the environment in one way or other but advanced nations have brought this problem to its height. The most dangerous and critical pollution is nuclear pollution. The nuclear radiation can be fatal for the entire living creatures on this earth. To save this earth from dangerous elements of environmental pollution, the whole world has to stand together by leaving their political differences because every living creature has right to breathe in safe and clean atmosphere. The efforts to save this from environmental pollution have already begun.

The nuclear pollution is the most dangerous element for the human civilisation. The mad race for nuclear weapons can be one of the major cause of annihilation of humanity from this earth because of two reasons, one if nuclear weapons are used for war, it will wipe out entire civilisation and secondly the radiation from nuclear explosions is fatal not only for

the current civilisation but also have impact for centuries. The nuclear explosions are made to produce nuclear weapons and huge amount of nuclear radiation is released from such explosions and this is the most fatal harmful element in environmental pollution.

Partial Atomic Test Ban Treaty is a step forward to slowdown nuclear pollution. Former Soviet Union, USA and Britain took the initiative to stop these explosions partially. They came to an agreement and concluded a treaty in 1963 at Moscow. According to this treaty no nation can make nuclear explosion on the surface of the earth, in outer atmosphere and under the water. This was a partial effort because there was no ban to make explosion under the earth. This treaty couldn't successful because China and France were not signatories on this treaty.

Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty which is commonly known as 'NPT' is another serious efforts by Soviet Union, USA and Britain to further curtail the numbers of nuclear explosions. They considered that nuclear proliferation is fatal and serious to pollution and it must be discouraged for such explosions. This treaty came in to existence in March, 1970 and declared that no nuclear nation will provide any assistance or aid to non-nuclear nations for any nuclear explosions. Nuclear nations will provide the technology of peaceful use of nuclear energy. International Atomic Energy Commission will be authorised to make periodical inspections to check the status of non-nuclear nations. This treaty was concluded for 25 years but 1995 it has been extended for unlimited period with certain minor modifications. India and some other countries are not signatories to this treaty but they consider it discriminatory and it gives monopoly and immense nuclear powers to nuclear nations.

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in Open Sea is another international effort to save from nuclear environmental pollution which was concluded in 1970 to save sea and living beings in the sea. The nations used to make explosions on the surface of the sea or under the sea and such explosions release a huge amount of radiation in the sea which is fatal and dangerous for the living organism in the sea. So a resolution was passed under this treaty that no nuclear explosion will be carried out on the surface or the under the sea to save the sea creatures from the harmful radiations of nuclear energy.

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is the most landmark effort to save human civilisation from the dangers of nuclear environmental degradation which is popularly known as CTBT. This treaty is considered as most effective international measure to curb the danger of nuclear radiations which is the major cause for nuclear pollution. The treaty was negotiated at Geneva conference on 'Disarmament' and was concluded on 24th September 1996 by General Assembly of United Nations. Initially 71 nations were signatories of this treaty including five nuclear powers out of eight. The treaty bans all types of nuclear explosions. According to this treaty no nation can make nuclear explosion at any place or under any condition and violation of treaty means international boycotts and economic sanctions against the violator. Although this treaty is considered as discriminatory for the non-nuclear powers and it gives immense powers to nuclear states against non-nuclear states but it is beyond the doubt that such effective international measures can save earth and living organism on this earth from the fatal danger of nuclear radiations.

Stockholm Conference: The first major international step towards this direction was Stockholm, Sweden convention which was conveyed under the direction of General Assembly of United Nations Organisation from 5th June to 16th June 1972. The environmentalists, leaders and social activists from all over world to part in this convention and addressed the serious concerns of environmental for entire world and at the conclusions of convention the several declarations were signed for the safeguard of environment. The most important declaration was spread of education and consciousness about safe environment all over world specifically in the developing and under developed countries. They had the opinion that it will be the effective measure to protect the environment. The protection of environment is responsibility of all the nations and the entire human civilisation. So the government and Non-governmental organisations of all the nations must frame planning and policies for environment protection. They must create financial institutions to give financial aid and assistance to execute the planning and policies for this cause. It was declared that efforts will be made for the safeguard of natural resources of this earth and the conditions will be created for production of renewable

resources and non-renewable resources will be shared and will not be exhausted. International organisations all over the world will assist the governmental especially in third world countries to make this earth safe from the environmental pollution. According to the convention a harmonious balance should be created between development and environmental management especially in developed nations.

Nairobi Declaration: After one decade of Stockholm convention Nairobi declaration was carried out in 1982 to review and rethink about the efforts made for the protection of environment. The community of environmentalist from all over the world gathered at Nairobi, the capital of Kenya to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Stockholm convention on environment under the supervision and guidance of General Assembly of United Nations. The twin objectives of this gathering were to review the declarations made during Stockholm convention and new challenges of environmental pollutions which emerged during the last decade. The environmentalists expressed their dissatisfaction for the execution of declarations made during Stockholm convention. They were of the opinion that the attitude the governments and other organisations were not very energetic and serious for the executions of declarations made before ten years. The need of the hour is to intensify the efforts to save this earth from environmental degradation. A resolution was adopted at Nairobi that all nations and organisations will pledge to make long term policies for sustainable development by year 2000 and will continue it in future. It was also declared that it is responsibility of the all the states to protect the earth from environmental pollution for the future generations.

Earth Summit: In the last decade of 20th century, another landmark international event in this direction was 'Earth Summit' which was conveyed at Rio de Janeiro, the capital of Brazil. It was U.N conference which conveyed from 3 to 14th June, 1992 to discuss the serious concerns of environmental pollution. It was an unprecedented conference because representatives of 172 nations participated and about 108 representatives were either the head of the states or heads of the governments. Some 2400 representatives from NGOs from all over the world participated and the total strength of the participants in this conference was about 17000. The importance of this summit can be understood from its

size and the level of participation. It shows that how the whole world is seriously concerned about the safety of the earth. The total 21 agendas regarding different dimensions of environment were put forth before this UN conference to save earth and save humanity. Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, The Statement of Forest Principles, United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change and United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity were outcome of this conference. The major focus of this conference was to develop sustainable development by following the principles of Stockholm conventions.

United Nations Earth Summit 1997: It was another international effort the clean environment. This five day summit was conveyed on 23rd June at New York and the representatives of 170 nations took part. The major concerns of this summit were urgent problems of environment and socio-economic development. The summit showed its serious concern over the speedy depletion of forestry, different spices and fishery. It focused on the immediate implantation of 21 agendas of Rio summit.

The world Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD): Here it is noteworthy that this summit was called in Johannesburg, South Africa to review and address the issue of sustainable development to overcome the problem of environmental degradation in 2002. About 65000 representatives all over the world participated in this summit.

Rio+20 Summit: The last Earth Summit was held at Rio de Janeiro on 20 to 22nd June and it is known as 'Rio+20 Summit.' Its main concern was on sustainable development. It was just after the 20 years of first earth summit was held at Rio in 1992. About 40000 environmentalists and 10000 government officials from 190 nations participated in this summit to discuss the issue of sustainable development and environmental protections.

Paris Conference 2015: This conference on climate change has been regarded as a major step to protect the environment at the global level. Having held its breath for the 12 days of intense negotiation between the 196 parties (195 States plus the European Union) gathered at the Paris Conference, the planet can now breathe again. A balanced agreement was signed with the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It confirms the core aim of limiting the increase in the average temperature to 2 degrees and endeavouring to limit the

increase to 1.5 degrees in order to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the consequences of climate change. France played a major role in this historic event, pulling out all the stops to ensure the success of the Paris Climate Conference.

CONCLUSION: To conclude we can point out that in Stockholm, Sweden (1972) representatives from around the world gathered at one of the first ever global conferences focusing solely on the environment. The debate continued over, how to facilitate development of the world's poorer countries while preserving the environment at a second United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and 180 nations participated in this conference. Next step in this direction was Kyoto Protocol (1997) and Johannesburg Summit (2002). Further, the Rio+20 Earth Summit was one of the important efforts to discuss the environment issue, which was held at Rio-de-Janeiro (Brazil) on 20-22 June 2012. According to an estimate, 40,000 environmentalists and 10,000, government officials gathered with politicians from 190 nations. Next to it a conference on climate change was held at Paris in 2015. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the fact that still we need to do more work in this direction.

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