



UN ECOSOC Meet

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Why in News

Recently, the **United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** has held a high-level dialogue on the subject '**Multilateralism after Covid-19: What kind of UN do we need at the 75th Anniversary?**'

- The Prime Minister of India gave a speech focusing on **India's battle against the Covid-19 pandemic** and emphasised upon the **need of multilateralism in achieving sustainable peace and prosperity.**
- He also indicated **India's push for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.**
- The UN will celebrate its **75th anniversary on 24th October 2020.**

Key Points

- **Covid-19 and Current Indian Scenario:**
 - India has **crossed the 1 million mark** for Covid-19 cases recently, making it the **third highest incidence** in the world.
 - India also has the **third highest recoveries** at about 644,000, **after the USA and Brazil.**
 - However, its **recovery rate is about 63%**, which ranks **India at number 42** in the world.

- **India's Efforts Against Covid-19:**

- India has **extended assistance** to more than 150 countries.
For example, assistance in materials and services to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives (**Operation Sanjeevani**), Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- India set up a **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Covid-19 Emergency Fund** in the South Asian neighbourhood.
- **PM Cares Fund** to deal with any kind of emergency or distress situation like posed by the current pandemic.
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan** with **various economic stimulus packages** worth Rs. 20 lakh crore aimed towards achieving the mission of self reliance.

Multilateralism

- It is the **process of organizing relations between groups of three or more states.**
- It generally comprises certain qualitative elements or principles that shape the character of the arrangement or institution. **These principles are:**
 - **Indivisibility of interests** among participants.
 - Commitment to **diffuse reciprocity**, i.e. not an equivalence of obligations or concessions in any one exchange but a balance in an ongoing, potentially indefinite, series of exchanges with a group of partners instead of expectations of direct obligations or concessions by a particular member.
 - System of **dispute settlement** intended to enforce a particular mode of behaviour.
- Multilateralism has a long history but it is principally associated with the era after **World War II**, during which there was a rapid growth of multilateral agreements.
The organizations most strongly embodying the principle of multilateralism are to be found in **trade** like the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** and **security** like the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**.
- Multilateral institutions have played a **significant role in postwar global governance** and are arguably **more stable** than other forms of organization because the **principles underlying them appear to be more durable and more able to adapt** to external changes.

Economic and Social Council

- It is the principal body for **coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues**, as well as **implementation of internationally agreed development goals.**

- It has **54 members**, elected by the General Assembly for **overlapping three-year terms**.
- It is the UN's **central platform for reflection, debate and innovative thinking on sustainable development**.
- **Each year, ECOSOC structures its work around an annual theme of global importance** to sustainable development. This **ensures focused attention**, among ECOSOC's array of partners and throughout the UN development system.
- It **coordinates the work** of the 14 UN specialized agencies, ten functional commissions and five regional commissions, receives reports from nine UN funds and programmes and issues policy recommendations to the UN system and to member states.
- **Few important bodies under the purview of ECOSOC:**
 - **International labour Organization** (ILO)
 - **Food and Agriculture Organization** (FAO)
 - **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization** (UNESCO)
 - **World Health Organization** (WHO)
 - Bretton Woods Twins (**World Bank Group** and **International Monetary Fund**)
 - **United Nations Children's Fund** (UNICEF)
 - Apart from these there are various Functional and Regional Commissions, Standing Committees, Ad Hoc and Expert Bodies as well.

Way Forward

- India called on the UN members to pledge for reform within the world body and held that the multilateral system needs to be more representative.
- The United Nations was originally born from the furies of World War II and the current fury of the pandemic provides the context for its rebirth and reform.
- At this pivotal moment, with Covid-19 still spreading, geopolitical tensions rising and the cry for racial justice, social justice and climate justice ever more urgent, the UN and world leaders have a responsibility to respond to the anxieties, fears and hopes of the people.

Source: TH