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Emissions Gap Report 2020: UNEP

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Why in News

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'s **Emissions Gap Report 2020** has been published recently.

The annual report from UNEP measures the gap between anticipated emissions and levels consistent with the **Paris Agreement** goals of limiting global warming this century to well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C.

Key Points

- **Analysis for the year 2019:**

- **Record high GreenHouse Gas (GHG) emissions:**

- Global GHG emissions continued to grow for the third consecutive year in 2019, reaching a record high of **52.4 Gigatonne carbon equivalent (GtCO₂e) without including land use changes (LUC)**.
- There is some indication that the **growth in global GHG emissions is slowing**.

However, GHG emissions are **declining in Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) economies and increasing in non-OECD economies**.

- **Record carbon emission:**

- **Fossil carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions (from fossil fuels and carbonates) dominate total GHG emissions.**
- Fossil CO₂ emissions reached a record **38.0 GtCO₂ in 2019**.

- **Forest fires increasing GHG emissions:**

Since 2010, global GHG emissions have grown **1.4% per year on average**, with a more rapid increase of **2.6% in 2019** due to a large **increase in vegetation forest fires**.

- **G20 countries account for bulk of emissions:**

- Over the last decade, the **top four emitters (China, the United States of America, EU27+UK and India)** have contributed to **55% of the total GHG emissions without LUC**.
- The **top seven emitters** (including the Russian Federation, Japan and international transport) have contributed to 65%, with G20 members accounting for 78%.

The ranking of countries changes when considering **per capita emissions**.

- **On consumption-based emissions:**

There is a general tendency that **rich countries have higher consumption-based emissions** (emissions allocated to the country where goods are purchased and consumed, rather than where they are produced) than **territorial-based emissions**, as they typically have cleaner production, relatively more services and more imports of primary and secondary products.

Both emission types have **declined at similar rates**.

- **Impact of the Pandemic:**
 - **Emissions Level: CO₂ emissions could decrease by about 7% in 2020** compared with **2019 emission levels**, with a **smaller drop expected in GHG emissions** as **non-CO₂** is likely to be less affected.

The resulting atmospheric concentrations of GHGs such as **methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) continued to increase in both 2019 and 2020.**
 - **Sector reporting the lowest dip in emission due to pandemic:**

The biggest changes have occurred in **transport**, as restrictions were targeted to **limit mobility**, though reductions have also occurred in other sectors.
- **Issues and Possible Solutions:**
 - The world is still heading for a temperature rise in excess of **3°C this century**. The levels of ambition in the Paris Agreement still must be roughly **tripled for the 2°C pathway and increased at least fivefold for the 1.5°C Pathway**.
 - Rise of 3°C in global temperatures **could cause catastrophic weather-related events** around the world.
 - UN Experts believe the way to avoid it is encourage **green recovery** for countries facing Covid-induced economic slumps.
 - A green recovery involves **investment in zero emissions tech and infrastructure**, reducing **fossil fuel subsidies**, **stopping new coal plants**, and **promoting nature-based solutions**, according to the UN.
 - Such actions could cut 25% of predicted emissions by 2030, and gives the planet a 66% chance of keeping warming below the 2°mark that the Paris pact had set as a long term goal.

United Nations Environment Programme

- The UNEP is a leading global environmental authority established on **5th june 1972**.
- **Functions:** It sets the **global environmental agenda**, promotes the sustainable development within the **United Nations system**, and serves as an authoritative advocate for global environment protection.
- **Major Reports:** Emission Gap Report, Global Environment Outlook, Frontiers, Invest into Healthy Planet.
- **Major Campaigns:** Beat Pollution, UN75, World Environment Day, Wild for Life.
- **Headquarters:** Nairobi, Kenya.

Source:DTE