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Making Peace with Nature: UNEP Report

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Why in News

The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** has released the '**Making Peace with Nature**' report, **ahead of the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5)**.

The Report explains how **climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution add up to three self-inflicted planetary emergencies** that are closely interconnected and put the well-being of current and future generations at unacceptable risk.

Key Points

- **Findings:**
 - **Planetary Emergencies:**
 - **Climate Change:** Climate change is **increasing the chances of the Arctic Ocean being ice-free** in summer, further disrupting ocean circulation and Arctic ecosystems.

Climate change **drives changes in wildfires** and water stress and combines with biodiversity loss to **degrade land and enhance drought** in some regions.
 - **Biodiversity Loss:**
 - More than one million of the estimated 8 million plant and animal species are increasingly at risk of extinction.
 - **Coral reefs are particularly vulnerable to climate change** and are projected to decline to 10-30% of their former cover at 1.5°C of warming and to less than 1% at 2°C of warming, compromising food provision, tourism and coastal protection.
 - **Pollution:**
 - Every year, nine million people die prematurely due to pollution.
 - Up to **400 million tons of heavy metals**, solvents, toxic sludge and other industrial wastes enter the world's waters annually.
 - **Widening Inequalities:**
 - Human prosperity is strained by widening inequalities, whereby the **burden of environmental decline weighs heaviest on the poor and vulnerable** and looms even larger over **today's youth and future generations**.
 - **Inequity in economic growth has left 1.3 billion people poor.**
 - **Performance over SDGs:**
 - Current and projected changes in climate, biodiversity loss and pollution make achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** even more challenging.
 - The current mode of development **degrades the Earth's finite capacity** to sustain human well-being.
 - **Performance over Different Targets:**
 - Society is **failing to meet most of its commitments to limit environmental damage**.
 - Society is not on course to achieve **land degradation neutrality, Aichi Targets** and targets of the **Paris Agreement**.

- **Suggestions:**
 - **Human knowledge, ingenuity, technology and cooperation** can transform societies and economies and secure a sustainable future.
 - Given the interconnected nature of climate change, loss of biodiversity, land degradation, and air and water pollution, it is essential that these problems are **tackled together**.
 - Governments must **scale up and accelerate** action to meet the **Paris Agreement** goals and limit dangerous climate change.
 - **Economic and financial systems** can and must be transformed to lead and power the shift toward sustainability.
 - **Moving to circular economic systems** that reuse resources, reduce emissions and weed out the chemicals and toxins that are causing millions of premature deaths – all while creating jobs.

United Nations Environment Programme

- **About:** 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**, **Adaptation Gap Report**, **Global Environment Outlook**, Frontiers, Invest into Healthy Planet.
- **Major Campaigns:** Beat Pollution, UN75, World Environment Day, Wild for Life.
- **Headquarters:** Nairobi, Kenya.

United Nations Environment Assembly

- The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is the **governing body of the UN Environment Programme**.
- It is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment.
- It **meets biennially** to set priorities for global environmental policies and develop international environmental law.
- It was **created in June 2012**, during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also referred to as RIO+20.

Source: DTE