UNIT 6 INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AND AGREEMENTS

Structure

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you have studied about the principle and recommendations of various summits and conferences held for the protection of the environment. In this unit we will discuss the international laws enacted and agreements made for protecting and preserving environment for sustenance of life on our planet.

With the rising level of environmental degradation, the international law has expanded to cover environmental issues also. This became necessary since pollution tended to transcend national boundaries. A respectable number of international agreements have been concluded on environmental issues. However, it is not possible or desirable to discuss all of them. Therefore, in this Unit we shall discuss only the general principles of International Environmental legislation and salient features relating to some of the important laws and agreements.

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the general principles of international environmental law;
- discuss the salient features of major international environmental agreements;
- examine the impact of North vs. South dynamics on the development of international environmental law; and
- analyse the implications of strong environmental standards for the development prospects of the South.

6.2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

The overall examination of the international environmental law reveals eight principles, which we briefly describe in this section.

- **Principle of State Responsibility**

  A state incurs state responsibility if it commits a breach of international obligation, say, not to pollute an international river. An international obligation stems primarily from an International treaty, custom or judicial decision.

A state will be responsible if

- the wrongful act/omission has resulted in the breach of any International obligation;
- the breach is committed by the agents of the State;
- the wrong is done by a private individual and the state did not exercise due diligence to prevent the damage.

State responsibility is a traditional principle of general international law which can be applied to environmental wrong doings.

- **Principle of Good Neighbourliness**

According to the most basic principle of international law, every state has an absolute authority to use and enjoy its own territory. However, according to the customary principle of good neighbourliness, a state has to use its property in such a way that its action does not injure and harm the property or the legal interests of another state.

Good neighbourliness is a backdoor through which environmental law has entered the international field. For example, in Trail Smelter Arbitration, the toxic fumes from the smelting operations carried out in the Canadian territory escaped into USA. As a result, the property of a US citizen was damaged. Canada was held responsible on the basis of violating the principle of good neighbourliness.

- **Principle of Cooperation**

This is also a general principle of International law. It holds good in dealing with environmental problems. Global environmental problems cannot be managed without state cooperation.

- **Principle of Sustainable Development**

Principle 3 of the Rio Declaration describes sustainable development as a tool that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own.

This principle is popularly understood as the principle of integration between ecological and economic concerns. It is based on the understanding that the goals of environmental prosecution and economic development are complementary to each other and one cannot be achieved without the other.

- **Principle of Polluter Pays**

It means that the polluter has to pay for the consequences of pollution. That is, the polluter has the responsibility of bearing the costs of rectifying the environmental damage resulting from pollution. This principle has a special importance as far as the North-South relationship is concerned. The North has a major share in global pollution; so, the South demands that the North has to take greater responsibility and pay more for the costs for not adhering to pollution abatement measures.

We give here an illustration of this principle from India.

Fig.6.1: Untreated effluent from tanneries

Petitioner, the Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum, filed this action to stop tanneries in the State of Tamil Nadu from discharging untreated effluent into agricultural fields, open lands and waterways. Among other types of environmental pollution caused by these tanneries, it is estimated that nearly 35,000 hectares of agricultural land in this tanneries belt has become either partially or totally unfit for cultivation, and that the 170 types of chemicals used in the chrome tanning processes have severely polluted the local drinking water. The Court has passed other orders relating to this case, and has monitored this petition for almost five years.

Source : *http://www.unescap.org/drpad/vc/document/compendium/in5.htm*

- **Principle of Precaution**

  We know that prevention is better than cure. There are some kinds of environmental damages of very serious and irreversible nature. In such cases, scientific uncertainties about the possible harm should not be used as a reason for postponing preventive actions.

- **Principle of Intergenerational Equity**

  This principle requires us to remember that the earth is not the exclusive property of the present generation of human beings only. It is a common endowment for the entire mankind. So, we should hold the planet earth in trust for the future generation. We should use the natural resources carefully and avoid causing unnecessary environmental damages to people of future generation. This is a principle of fairness.

  A judgment of Philippines court is worth mentioning here. When the Philippines government gave permits for deforestation, 44 minors and an environmental organisation challenged the government against it. They contended that they are representing not only themselves but also future generations. The court allowed them to represent the case of unborn future generation also. This shows that intergenerational equity principle is gaining good acceptance.

- **Principle of Common but Differential Responsibility**

  It is well recognised that the ill effects of environmental degradation will eventually affect all countries. Therefore, all states have to assume the common responsibility for protecting the environment. But the share of the contribution cannot be equal. It has to be different because all the countries do not have an equal capacity to maintain the environment. The states that pollute more and have higher capacity should share major responsibility in maintaining the environmental quality.

World Charter for Nature: general principles

The genetic viability on the Earth shall not be compromised; the population levels of all life forms, wild and domesticated, must be at least sufficient for their survival, and to this end necessary habitat shall be safeguarded.

All areas of the Earth, both land and sea shall be subject to these principles of conservation; special protection shall be given to unique areas, to representative samples of all the different types of ecosystems and to the habitat of rare or endangered species.

Ecosystems and organisms, as well as the land, marine and atmospheric resources that are utilized by man [sic], shall be managed to achieve and maintain optimum sustainable productivity, but not in such a way as to endanger the integrity of those other ecosystems or species with which they co-exist.

Nature shall be secured against degradation caused by warfare or other hostile activities.

Source: *UN 1982*

SAQ 1

From newspapers and other sources, collect examples that illustrate the general principles of International laws for the environment enunciated in this section.

6.3 INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY: A SOUTHERN PERSPECTIVE

The Stockholm Conference, 1972 and the Rio Conference, 1992 laid down a broad and comprehensive international environmental policy. The North-South (which

Fig.6.2: Poverty and underdevelopment are major sources of environmental degradation

includes South Asia) dynamics has a great role to play in shaping the framework of this policy. The South opposed strong environmental policy; its arguments and demands being as follows:

- Environmental problems arise not just from over-development. Poverty due to underdevelopment is a major source of environmental degradation.
- The South does not have the economic and technological strength to follow strict legal commitments and international standards.
- The State has sovereign freedom to use and enjoy their resources for their development in accordance with their individual policies.
- North's extensive development and excessive consumption of natural resources caused major environmental degradation. Therefore, it should assume greater responsibility for the protection of environment (principles of polluter pays & common and differential responsibility)
- Economic developmental concerns should be integrated in environmental policies (Principle of sustainable development).
- North should transfer financial and technological resources to South to make it capable to protect the environment (principle of equity).

The South enters the third millennium facing monumental challenges when it comes to efforts for economic progress and sustainable and equitable development. At the core of these challenges is the ability of the South to participate in and benefit from the rapid advances in scientific research and technological innovations that now drive economic and social development. Several developing countries, including Argentina, Brazil, China, Cuba, India, Mexico and Singapore, have established research programmes in modern biology and biotechnologies of high standard. These countries are in a strong position to assist others in the South to develop their local capacities in this important field.

Source: *http://wmy2000.math.jussieu.fr/9_2000_Feb-_KOREA.htm*

Due to the South's opposition, no legally binding commitments could be adopted in the two conferences. They adopted only the declarations namely, United Nations Conference on Human Environment, 1972 (26 principles) and Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992 (27 principles). These declarations consist of only non binding principles.

In the Rio conference, apart from the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the following were adopted.

- Agenda 21
- Climate Change Convention
- Biodiversity Convention
- Non-Binding Principles of Forests

You have studied in the previous unit that the Rio Declaration consists of 27 principles. It contains all the general principles of international environmental law , i.e., sustainable development, polluter pays, precautionary principle, common but differential responsibility, good neighbourliness, state responsibility, Intergenerational equity, etc.

SAQ 2

Formulate your own views on each argument and demand of the South given in this section. Justify your views with facts, data and evidence.

You have studied about the important international laws in MED-002. Here we state them briefly for the sake of completeness.

6.4 IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

- **Ramsar Convention, 1971**

  This convention is adopted for the protection of wetlands. It recognises ecological functions and the economic, cultural, scientific and recreational values of wetlands. Under this, the state parties should designate at least one national wetland of international importance. Parties should assess the impact of any change of use of wetlands, should establish wetland as natural reserves, manage and make wisely use of the migratory stocks of waterfowl (bird) etc.

(a)

(b)

Fig.6.3: a) Wetlands in Karnataka; b) the Taj Mahal (**Source** : en.arocha.org/images/ shared/656l.jpeg and www.pgsindia.net/photos/)

- **World Heritage Convention, 1972**

  It highlights the universal value of the cultural and natural heritage. It advocates the international support for maintenance of the World Heritage sites. A state party has an obligation to identify, protect, conserve and transmit to future generations the unique cultural and natural Heritage of that country. Those sites that are nominated by the states will be enlisted on the World Heritage list.

World Heritage Sites

The coveted title of a world heritage site is granted by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). To qualify for the status, a site must possess the following attributes: It should represent a masterpiece of human creative genius, exhibit an important interchange of human values over a span of time, be an outstanding example of type of traditional human settlement or land-use, especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change. The following are some of the World Heritage sites in India: **Taj Mahal** , **Ellora Caves**,**Agra Fort**,**Ajanta Caves**,**Mahabalipuram** , **Sun Temple-Konark**, **Khajuraho**, **Fatehpur Sikri**,**Hampi** Monuments, **Kaziranga National Park**, **Keoladeo National Park**, **Sunderbans National Park**, **Nanda Devi National Park, Brihadisvara Temple Tanjore**, **Elephanta Caves**, **,Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi**,, **Qutub Minar**, **Humayun's Tomb- Delhi** ,**Darjeeling Himalayan Railway**s, **Mahabodhi Temple**, **Bodh Gaya**, **Champaner-Pavagadh Park**,**Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus**, i.e., **Victoria Terminus**.

Some of the World Heritage sites in the South Asian region include the Archaeological Ruins of Mohenjodaro and Taxila in Pakistan, Historic Mosque City of Bagerhat, Ruins of Buddhist Vihara at Paharpur, Sagarmatha National Park, Royal Chitwan National Park, Lumbini (birthplace of Buddha), Ruined city of Anuradhapura, monumental remains of Polonnaruwa and Galle, the Golden Temple of Dambulla in SriLanka.

Source: *http://www.the-south-asian.com/Sept2001/South%20Asian%20World%20Cultural%20heritage1.htm*

- **London Dumping Convention, 1972**

  This convention is designed to control the dumping of wastes in the sea. It requires the states to limit the dumping of such substances as radioactive material, biological and chemical warfare agents, persistent plastics, heavy metals and toxic organics. In 1993, bans on the ocean disposal of low level radioactive material and industrial wastes were adopted. A protocol was added in 1996. Under this, seven more substances were listed. These substances can be dumped only after getting permission.

- **Marpol Convention, 1973/78**

  This convention is aimed at preventing or reducing the discharges (international or accidental) from ships into seas. It greatly limits the amount of oil spill and ship generated waste which can be discharged into the sea. There is a complete ban against dumping in areas designated as special areas, for example, in the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico.

- **CITES, 1973 (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species)**

  Under this convention, parties should identify species that are, or may be threatened by trade. They should also identify those species that may be threatened unless the trade is regulated. The former should be listed in Appendix-I and the latter in Appendix-II. Commercial trade is forbidden for species listed in Appendix-I, for example, dolphins and whales. While not banned, the trade is strictly regulated in respect of species listed in Appendix-II.

According to the World Wildlife Fund, by the year 2025, one fifth of the existing species could be extinct. Following are some of the endangered species:

Sumatran Tiger: This is listed as critically endangered with the total population estimated at just 400 to 500. The world lost more than 90% of its tiger population in the 20th century and there are fewer than 5,000 alive in the wild, mainly in India, China, Siberia and Indonesia. Three of eight tiger sub-species are extinct: the Bali tiger, the Caspian tiger and the Javan tiger.

Sumatran oran-utang: With the forest habitats being cut down or burnt, these species are estimated at 4,000 to 6,000. In 1997, forest fires throughout Indonesia saw many oran-utangs flee into the hands of captors and hunters, although some were relocated to reserves. The species could be extinct by 2010, in case they are not protected.

Northern White Rhino: There are thought to be fewer than 25 northern white rhinos, all in Garamba National Park, Africa, and they are one of the world's 12 most endangered species. The decline has been attributed to poaching by rebel troops in Congo.

Snow leopard: The existing number is estimated to be fewer than 2,500 as the species is declining in China, Russia and Pakistan and is on the verge of extinction in Mongolia. The illegal trade in the bones and body parts for traditional medicines threatens its survival.

Mountain Guerilla: Only 650 are said to be alive in the Virunga range of volcanic mountains on the borders of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda.

Giant Panda: According to a survey, China's giant panda population is estimated at 160. The Chinese Government established 40 panda reserves, protecting about 45% of the panda habitat.

Source: *Following the dodo, The Hindu, September 5, 2004. (Excerpts from Guardian Newspapers Limited, 2004).*

- **Law of the Sea Convention, 1982 (Parts V & XII)**

  It seeks to protect and preserve the marine environment. It directs the states to take measures to prevent, reduce and control the marine pollution, protect fragile ecosystems, monitor risk/effects of marine pollution etc. A state should not cause

damage to the other states by pollution. It should notify other states where marine environment is in imminent danger. In the EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone), there should not be over exploration of living resources by the coastal state.

- **Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer, 1985 & Montreal Protocol, 1987**

  Ozone is a protective layer of the atmosphere. It shields the earth from the Sun's harmful radiation. We all know that CFCs (Chlorofluorocarbons) deplete ozone. The Vienna Convention, 1985 followed by 1987 Montreal Protocol aims at phasing out the production and consumption of ozone depleting substances. The Montreal Protocol sets firm targets for the states for phasing out the CFCs. But it has permitted the developing states to delay their compliance of the protocol. It has also provided for the transfer of necessary technology to the developing states. The convention also restricts the trading of ozone depleting substances.

- **Basel Convention (On the control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes), 1989**

  Hazardous wastes cause severe damage. Most often these Hazardous Wastes (hereafter referred as to HW) are exported by the developed states to the developing states. Therefore, this convention has special significance to them. This convention seeks to minimise the level of HW from its source of generation. No export is allowed to the countries which prohibit the HW unless consent is given by them. There should also be no export if there is a reason to believe that these wastes will not be managed by the importer in an environment friendly and sound manner. The availability of disposal facilities in the importing state should be ensured by the exporting state before exporting the HW. State parties should develop and prescribe guidelines for environmentally sound management of HW.

- **Agenda–21**

  It is a massive 800 paged document adopted by the Rio conference. It contains the Action-Programme for attaining sustainable development. It lays down 115 specific programmes. It is a key document but is not binding. Its recommendations are classified into different areas such as socio-economic issues to protect and promote human health, conservation and management of resources such as combating deforestation, desertification and drought, promotion of sustainable agriculture and rural development, strengthening networks consisting of women, NGOs, business, scientific and technological community, farmers, through financial resources, transfer of environment friendly technology, training, international legal instruments and mechanisms.

Fig.6.4: An action plan for Agenda 21 at the local level

- **Climate Change Convention, 1992**

  Long term fluctuations in temperature and other aspects are known as climate change. Global warming is a major environment problem shaking the entire world. It is caused due to the GHG (Green House Gas) emissions. According to the United Nations, climate change is "change of climate that is attributed to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods". This convention aims to stabilise the GHG emissions. The convention lays down general commitments applicable to all (annexed as well as non-annexed) state parties. These are to limit GHG emissions, gather relevant information, develop plans to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and cooperate in research and development.

  Under the convention, state parties fall into two categories, Annexed and Non-Annexed states. Annexed states are sub-divided into Annex - I (consisting of industrial states, OECD states and economies in transition) and Annex-II states

(consisting only of OECD States). Annex-I states have specific commitments to bring down their GHG emission to 1990 level. The Annex-II states also have to bring down the GHG emissions but their baseline limit is not 1990. The baseline can be voluntarily fixed by them. In 1997, Kyoto Protocol was attached to the convention to supplement it. By this, the specific and legally binding targets are fixed for the industrialised states to cut at least 5% from 1990 level. The target period is from 2008 to 2012. The Protocol also suggested the mechanisms for the fulfilment of targets.

Effects of Global Warming in the Himalayan Region

Environmentalists are warning that the melting of glaciers in the Himalayas could spell disaster for millions of people living in the region. They claim the situation is not being adequately monitored; the last major studies having been done in the 1990s. Swelling glacial lakes would increase the risk of catastrophic flooding. In the long term, the glaciers could disappear altogether, causing several rivers to shrink and threatening the survival of those who depend on them. There are 3,300 glaciers in the Nepalese Himalayas and 2,300 of them contain glacial lakes. These lakes are quietly growing because of rising temperatures, but a sufficiently close eye is not being kept on them. Campaigners say that no steps have been taken to install early warning systems. A burst would cause flash floods which could sweep away people, houses, roads and bridges in Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and India. Such disasters are reported to have occurred at least a dozen times in the last 70 years. This could also lead to the drying up of rivers, thereby triggering a major water crisis in the region.

Source: *http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3998967.stm*

- **Biodiversity Convention, 1992**

  It is the first global treaty which adopted a comprehensive ecosystems approach. Biodiversity is very essential for ensuring sustainable development. Initially the North wanted to declare biodiversity as the Common Heritage of Mankind. But the South refused because it wanted to retain the sovereign supremacy over its biodiversity. The convention outlined 3 objectives: 1) Conservation of biodiversity. 2) Sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and 3) Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of using biodiversity.

  Under the convention, the states have obligations to develop national programmes for conserving and sustainably using the biodiversity, prepare inventories of bio-resources, take *ex-situ & in situ* conservation measures, establish a system of protected areas etc; it should be noted that the South is very rich in its biodiversity. Therefore, it has high stakes in this convention.

Fig.6.5: Biodiversity conservation is one of the topmost priorities in the world today

The Cartagena Protocol is an attachment to biodiversity convention. It is based on the precautionary principle. The benefits and dangers of biotechnology are not fully known. Therefore according to this Protocol, adequate measures of protection must be taken in matters of transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to the variability among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part. Tropical forests are the most species -rich environments. Though they cover less than 10% of the world's surface, they contain 90% of world's species. Living organisms contribute to a wide variety of environmental services such as the regulation of the gaseous composition of the atmosphere, protection of coastal zones, regulation of the hydrological cycles and climate, generation and conservation of fertile soils, dispersal and breakdown of wastes, absorption of pollutants, and pollination of many crops. They have an impact on human health and well being; 10 of the world's top selling drugs in 1997 were derived from natural resources.

The estimated number of described species is as following:

1) Bacteria-4000, 2) Protoctists (algae, protozoa)-80,000, 3) Animals (vertebrates)-52,000, 4) Animals (invertebrates)-12,72,000, 5) Fungi-72,000, 6) Plants-2,70,000.

Source : UNEP-WCMC (2000) Global Biodiversity Assessment, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

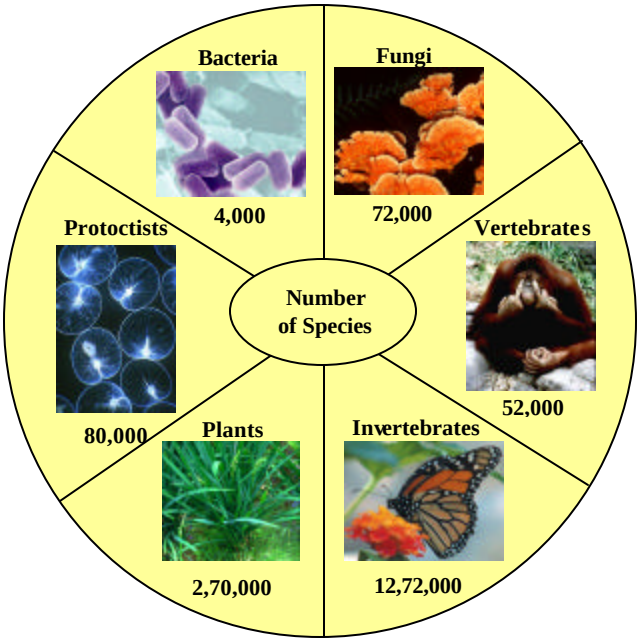

Fig.6.6: The estimated number of described species

- **UN Convention on Desertification, 1994**

States are directed to give priority to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought. They have to prepare and implement the national programmes in this regard. The CCD, as it is popularly called, endorses and employs a 'bottom-up' approach to international environmental cooperation. Its activities are related to the control and alleviation of desertification and the effects are to be closely linked to the needs and participation of local land users.

The Parties to the Convention have to make the prevention of desertification a priority in national policies and must promote awareness of desertification among their citizens.

- **HNS Convention, 1996 (International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in connection with the carriage of Hazardous and Noxious substances)**

  This convention provides for liability and compensation for damage resulting from maritime accidents involving the carriage of hazardous and noxious substances.

An overall examination of the international environmental agreements shows that they have laudable objectives. But most of these conventions do not contain firm legal commitments. They, at the most, represent weak political compromises. Unfortunately, states do not follow even those commitments that are agreed upon. The major draw back of international law is that there is no effective enforcement machinery. Therefore, most international obligations relating to environment are consistently violated. The economic implications prevent the South from agreeing to the adoption of strong environmental laws at the International level. Being rich, the North is expected to take the major lead and help the South by transferring its economic and technological resources. But so far, the North's contribution in this regard is nominal. Therefore, the weakness of International environmental law is likely to remain as long as the stalemate between the South and North continues.

6.5 ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS: THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH ASIA

South Asia is the worst affected on both environmental and economic fronts. The levels of both poverty and environmental degradation are alarming.

South Asia's economic development and public health are at stake with the rise of environmental problems. In response to the environmental problems, the South Asian countries did adopt various legal and administrative measures. But these measures suffer from many drawbacks such as superficiality, laxity, obsolete standards, high bureaucratic content, bad implementation, corruption, lack of coordination amongst enforcing agencies, people's ignorance, inadequate right to information to public, etc.

Though it is true that the economic and technological backwardness prevents them from adopting tough environmental laws, it is important for South Asian countries to take into account the long term implications of poor laws to their economic development and public health. For example, if energy resources are inefficiently used due to ineffective environmental management, no economic development is possible in future. South Asia has to keep this in mind and develop its internal laws so as to protect its environment and economic development in the best possible way.

Environmental laws have both local and international implications. Environmental standards are high in the North and poor in South Asia. Industrial enterprises are attracted towards South Asia because of its loose environmental standards. The North views this as unfair trade advantage. Environmentalists warn that this leads to a "race to the bottom" situation, i.e., countries will reduce their environmental standards further to attract industries. This will severely damage the environment; South Asia has to seriously think about the environmental and public health implications if the polluting industries concentrate in this region.

The high environmental standards of the North also pose a challenge to South Asia's economic prospects. In many instances the North has banned or restricted the trade imports from South Asia on the ground that these goods do not conform to their local standards. Recently the USA banned shrimp imports from South Asia because these

were caught without using TED (Turtle Excluder Device) resulting in the killing of turtles, an endangered species. On the basis of free trade principles, the World Trade Organisation has given a decision in favour of India and Pakistan in this case. But the larger issue remains unanswered: How to reconcile the differences in the local environmental laws and standards? Whether trade restrictions could be used for improving environmental standards? How to know if the trade barrier is a disguised domestic protection? Though the issue is being debated, this issue, however, cannot be discussed in much detail here. But we have to remember that the South Asian region has a great diplomatic responsibility to ensure that the international environmental standards are not allowed to be set through the WTO mechanism, which inherently favours the North.

The South Asian region has 19% of global population on 2% of the land area, including almost 50% of the World's malnourished children. The sub-region is subjected to several natural hazards like earthquakes, droughts, cyclones etc. Other environmental issues in the region include overpopulation, deforestation, overgrazing, pollution, soil erosion and so on as you have studied in MED-001. Even though these countries have, over the years, striven hard to achieve self-reliance, under-nourishment continues to plague the region time and again. Though the region has abundant ecological resources, many of them are either untapped or lack the necessary technology to exploit the rich resources. The foremost requirements of the region are to:

Develop a global funding mechanism to support the gene rich countries and regions having weak institutional and technical capacity for funding infrastructure development, personnel development and expertise.

Create international fund to assist PGR programmes in conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity to minimise destruction of natural habitats and genetic erosion.

Establish regional fund for the conservation and sustainable utilisation of resources.

Source: *www.fao.org/WAICENT/FaoInfo/Agricult/AGP/AGPS/pgrfa/pdf/pacific1.pdf+environmental+laws+in+south+asia&hl=en*

6.6 SUMMARY

- Environmental laws are one of the tools to tackle environmental problems. But due to many economic and political reasons (as reflected in the North/South dynamics) the international environmental law has been able to develop only as a framework law with no strong legal commitments on the part of the states.
- The South which includes South Asia has strong economic reasons to oppose the adoption of strong legal commitments. However, it is experiencing the economic as well as environmental consequences both at the national and international level due to its weak environmental standards.

6.7 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Elucidate the general principles of international environmental laws.
2. Explain the South's perspectives about international environmental policy.
3. Give an account of the salient features of various environmental laws.
4. Describe the salient features of international agreements adopted during Rio conference.
5. Explain the implications of environmental law and standards of South Asian countries.

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