



INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ITS CHANGING DIMENSIONS IN THE PRESENT SCENARIO

A.SUGANTHINI

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND RESEARCH SCHOLAR,

SCHOOL OF LAW,

VISTAS, VELS UNIVERSITY, PALLAVARAM

CHENNAI, TAMILNADU

R.AKSHAYA

III BA LLB

STUDENT

SCHOOL OF LAW,

VISTAS, VELS UNIVERSITY, PALLAVARAM

CHENNAI, TAMILNADU

ABSTRACT:

This Article studies about the International Conventions on Environmental law and Sustainable development. Safeguarding our environment is a great challenge in today's world and it is necessary to analyze whether these sustainable development goals can be achieved in 2030 has the target fixed. In the year 1972, the United Nations Organisation for the first time conducted the conference for the Protection of Environment. World is facing the threat of pollution to environment by way of hazardous wastes, green house effect, acid rain, ozone depletion, etc. It is high time that all countries have to unite together to put an end to environmental pollution. For this reason the United Nations environment programme has been set up to resolve and reduce environmental pollution and protect the environment.

Introduction:

The word Environment is derived from the French word "Environ" which means surrounding. The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines Environment as "the entire range of external influence acting on an organisms, force of nature surrounding on individual". The main problem faced by the Environment is pollution. Pollution affects adversely the quality of human life as well as animals, plants, industries and cultural and aesthetic assets. Pollution is generally

attributed to material substances like gases, smoke, wastes, etc. It may be non material as well such as noise pollution. Hence pollution directly or indirectly affects the environment.

The tremendous advancement of industrialization resulting into the economic development has continuously degraded the human development. Discharge effluents into the atmosphere, oil spills and dumping of refuse are the major sources of the pollution of human environment. Further industrialization, urbanization, over population and poverty also affects the human environment. The United Nations in the first two decades had faced difficulty in protecting the Environment.

Objectives:

The main objectives of this article are:

1. To find out whether there has been any progress in the Sustainable development Goals.
2. Whether the population living below poverty line has been reduced.
3. To analyse the current situation of Covid 19 as an obstacle in achieving the sustainable development goals.

International Conventions:

Stockholm Conference, 1972:

For the first time in 1968, Swedish Delegation proposed in the General Assembly for convening of conference on Human Environment. The Assembly approved the proposal by adopting a resolution on December 3, 1968¹. In 1969, the Assembly assigned to the Secretary General the overall responsibility for organizing and preparing the conference and established a preparatory committee for 27 members to assist him.

The United Nations conference on Human Environment was held at Stockholm (Sweden) from June 5 to 16, 1972. The main aim of the conference was to encourage and provide guidelines for action by governments and international organizations to protect and improve the Human Environment.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

As a result of Stockholm conference, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was set up by the General Assembly on December 15, 1972². The main functions of the UNEP was to promote International cooperation in the environment field, to receive and review periodic reports, etc.

Nairobi Declaration:

This session was commenced on 1982, to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Stockholm conference. This declaration reaffirmed the commitment of the Stockholm Declaration, 1972. The main aim of this declaration was to achieve sustainable development. Some of the important provisions of the Nairobi Declaration are as follows:

- a) It was recognized that threats to the environment are aggravated by poverty as well as by wasteful consumption patterns.
- b) The human environment would greatly benefit from an international atmosphere of peace and security, free from the threat of any war and the waste of intellectual and natural resources on armaments as well as from apartheid, racial segregation and all forms of discrimination, colonial and other forms of oppression and foreign domination.
- c) Many environmental problems transcend national boundaries should be resolved.
- d) Developed countries should assist the developing countries which are affected by environmental disruption.
- e) To develop environmentally sound management.
- f) Preventive measures have to be taken to protect the environment.
- g) The World community of States solemnly reaffirms its commitment to the Stockholm Declaration and Action plan, as well as to the further strengthening and expansion of national efforts and international co-operation in the field of environmental protection.

¹ See General Assembly resolution 2398(XXIII) December 3, 1968.

² See General Assembly Resolution 2997, dated December 15, 1972.

Vienna Convention for the protection of Ozone Layer(1985):

The Convention was adopted on March 22, 1985 by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries which was organized by the UNEP and it came into force on September 22, 1988³. The Main object of this convention was to provide to States the International legal framework for working together to protect the stratospheric Ozone layer. This Convention was the starting point of the global co-operation for the protection of Ozone layer. Later Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on substances that Deplete the Ozone layer in the year 1987⁴ which has legally binding goals.

In the year 1989, the Basel Convention on the control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and other Disposal was entered. The scope of the convention wherein it prescribes for its applicability to 45 categories of wastes that are presumed to be hazardous. While 18 of these are waste streams, 27 others are wasted with clearly identified constituents. However in order to be classified as hazardous these categories of wastes need to exhibit one or more hazardous characteristics, viz, flammability, corrosiveness, toxicity or eco-toxicity.

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development(UNCED):

This is also known as Earth Summit. This was approved by the General Assembly on December 22,1989 by a resolution which called for a global summit on environment and development as a response to and to build upon, the Brundtland Report. Accordingly, the conference was held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) from June 3 to 14, 1992 wherein delegates from 182 nations participated. It was the largest inter governmental meeting ever held. The Conference adopted two major international documents,i.e.,Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and a non-binding statement on Forest Principles and two International Conventions.

The Agenda 21 sets out specific programmes to make long term changes in the development activities of all people, in order to put an end to ecological destruction and economic inequity. The Rio declaration was adopted with the goal of establishing a new and equitable global partnership through the creation of new levels of co-operation among states, key sectors of society and people.

Kyoto Protocol:

The third conference of the states parties to the climate change convention of 1992 held in Kyoto from December 1 to 10, 1997 adopted a protocol on December 10, 1997 which is known as Kyoto protocol to the United Nations framework convention on climate change. The protocol opened for signature on March 16, 1998 in New York and came into force on February 16, 2005. After having passed the final regulatory measures by consensus at the Montreal conference held in 2005, Kyoto protocol became operational from December 1 , 2005⁵.

The main feature of the protocol is that it sets binding targets for 37 industrialized countries and the European community for reducing green house gas (GHG) emissions.

The Kyoto protocol is regarded as the first step towards the global mission reduction regime that will stabilize GHG emissions and provide the essential architecture for any future international agreement on climate change.

Sustainable development goals:

Sustainable development goals was started to achieve goals for human development from the year 2000 - 2015. It is also called as the Millennium development goals. The Eight goals are as follows:

1. to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. to achieve universal primary education;
3. to promote gender equality and empower women;

³ India ratified the Convention on March 18,1991

⁴ The Protocol came into force on January 1,1989

⁵ The Protocol has been ratified by 184 States. The United States and Australia have not ratified the Protocol.

4. to reduce child mortality;
5. to improve maternal health;
6. to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases;
7. to ensure environmental sustainability; and
8. to develop a global partnership for development

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was not satisfied and hence it was extended again in the year 2016. It was also known as global goals. Its main aim was to eradicate poverty. This was also called as Agenda 2030. It was the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development took place in Rio de

Janeiro, Brazil on 20-22 June 2012. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly in UN Resolution 70/1 and intended to be achieved by the year 2030. It resulted in a focused political outcome document which contains clear and practical measures for implementing sustainable development.

The following are the 17 goals of Agenda 2030:

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
10. Reducing Inequality
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life On Land
16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships for the Goals



This study is to find out whether these sustainable development goals have been achieved or not for the past 5 years. The main aim of the 2030 Agenda was to eradicate poverty. But on study it is clear not all nations have not yet achieved this goal. The outbreak of the Covid 19 virus has increased the population of people living below poverty line. Many people who were working on daily wages lost their job and has been pushed to live in poverty. Zero Hunger also could not be achieved. In spite of lots of conventions and protocol, environmental development could not be achieved as expected. All the World countries have to take steps to achieve the Sustainable development goals after the end of this virus.

Conclusion and Suggestions:

Though the world countries and the members of the United Nations are taking steps to attain the sustainable development goals there have been certain obstacles. The world countries have to take more caution on acid rain, greenhouse gases, industrial wastes and mainly on eradicating poverty. The world is looking forward to achieve the sustainable development goals by 2030 so that the world is free from pollution.

References:

1. H.O.Agarwal, 21st edition, Central Law Publications, "International Law and Human Rights"
2. P. Leelakrishnan, 4th edition, Lexis Nexis, "Environmental Law in India"

