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FIAS – GS Foundation 2024 | Benchmark Assignment #151

GS FOUNDATION PROGRAM 2024*to be filled by the student:***BATCH: D3**

NAME: _____

ForumIAS Roll No: 19100 _____

Date: __ / __ / _____

Email Id: _____

Mobile No. _____

*For Office Use Only***Feedbacks:**

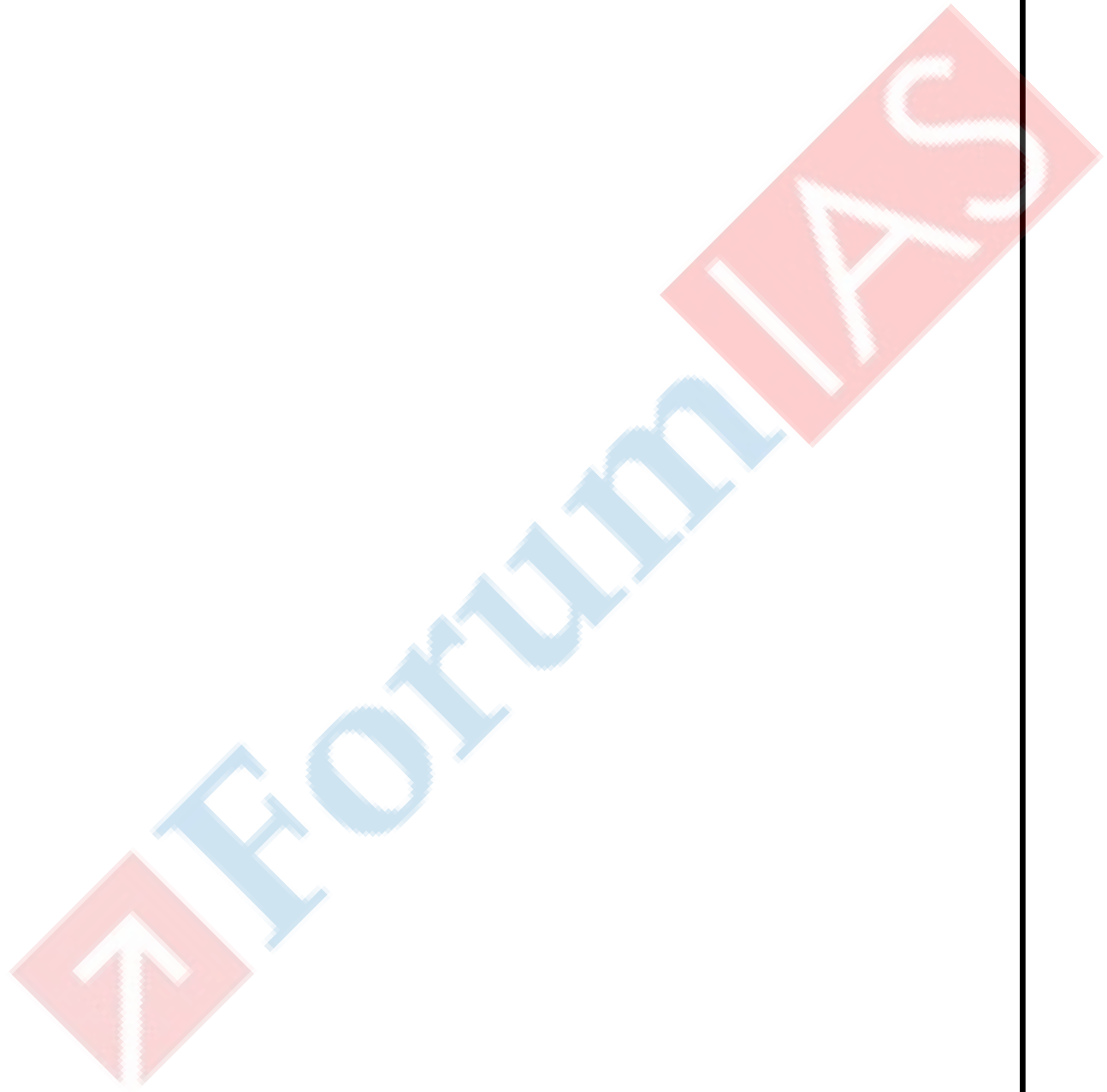
	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Immediate Efforts/Improvement Required
Content					
Presentation					
Structure					
Consistency					
Revision/Recall					

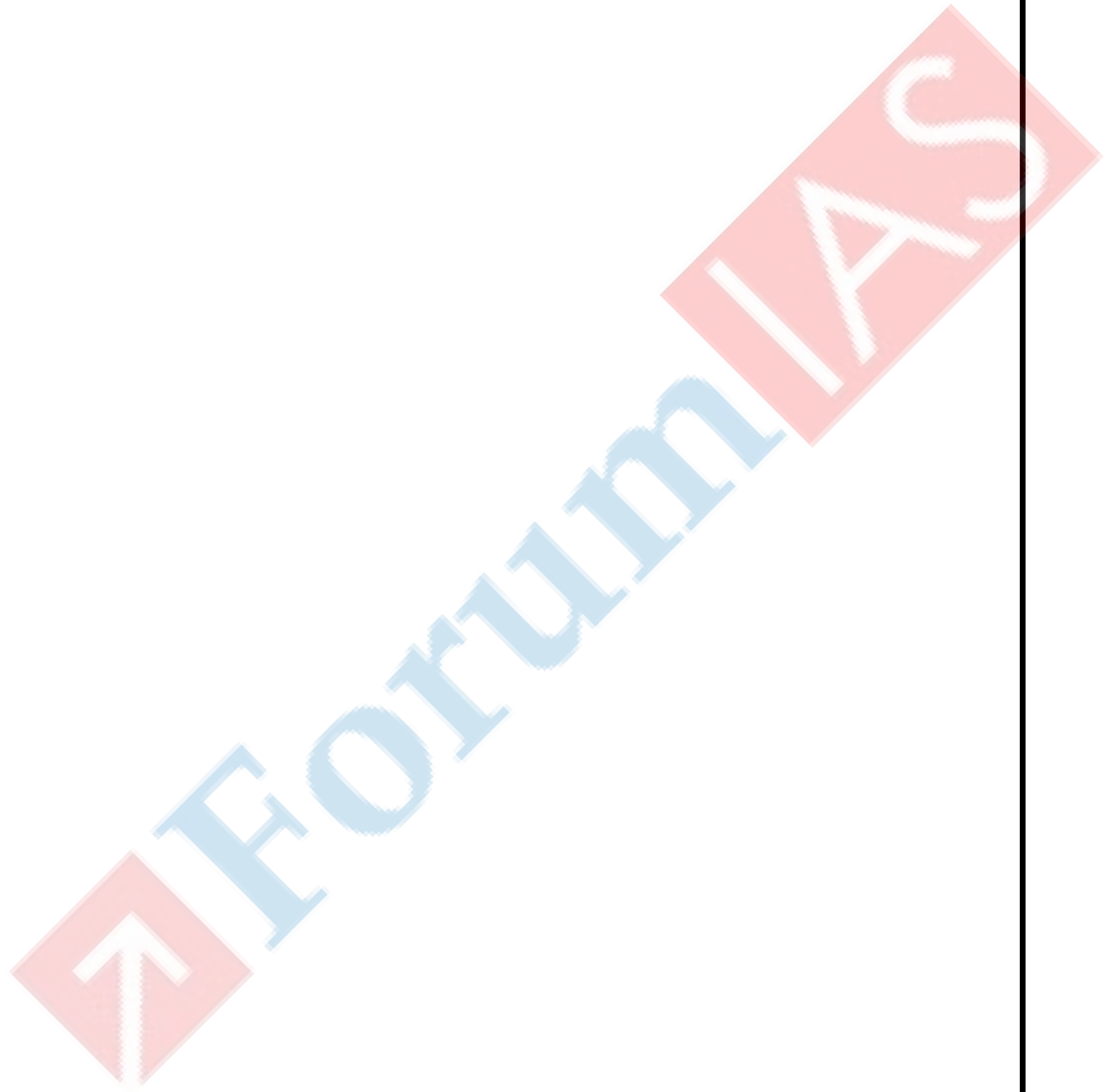
Marks:

Subjective	Objective	Total

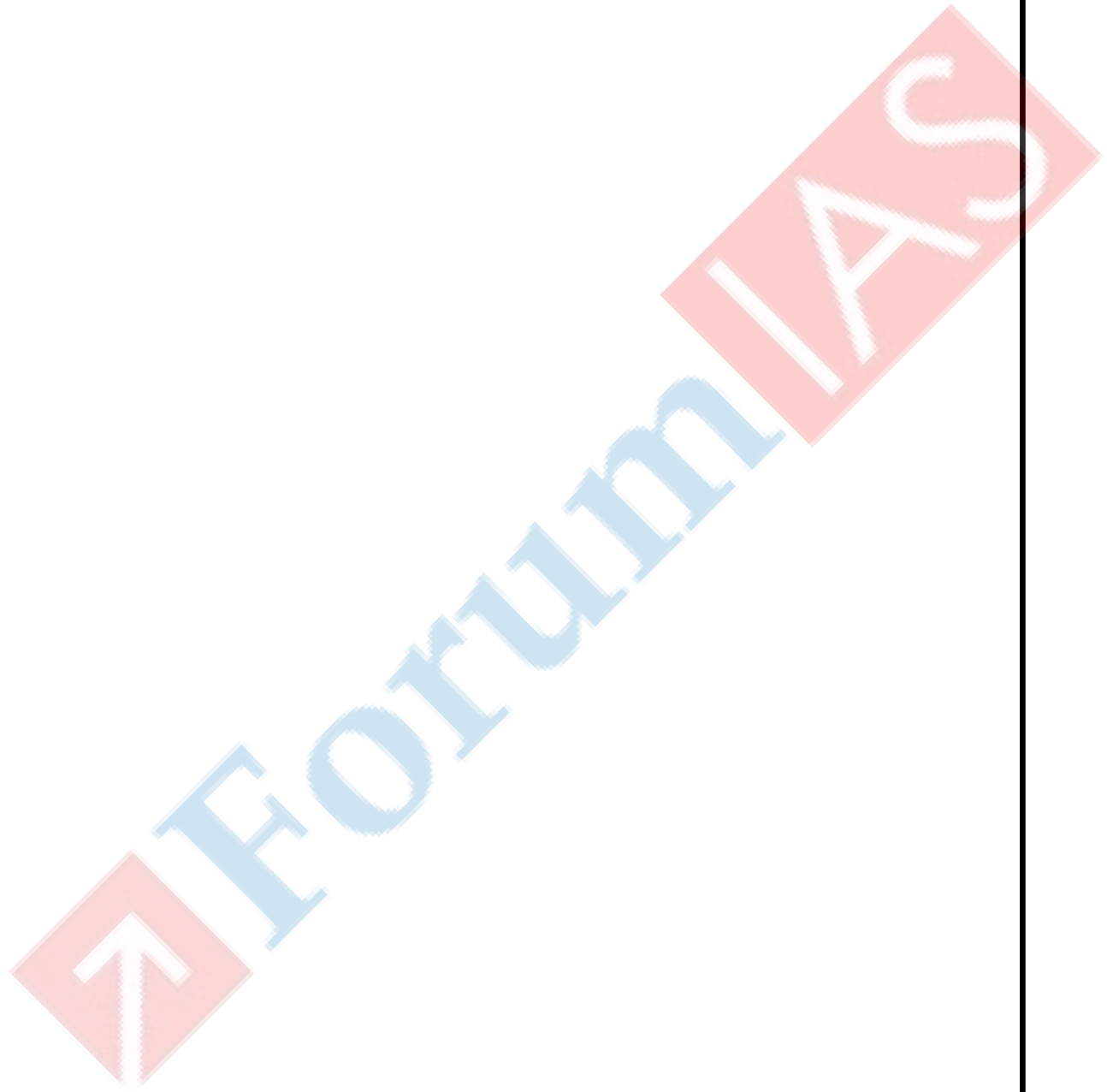
Subjective Questions:

Q.1) Discuss various features of Indian secularism. Mention various concerns related to secular democracy in India. (15 marks, 250 words)





Q.2) Outline the key results of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Elucidate India's commitments declared during this conference. (10 marks, 150 words)



Objective Questions:

Q.1) With reference to the Agreement at the UNFCCC Meeting in Paris in 2015, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The Agreement was signed by all the member countries of the UN and it will go into effect in 2017.
2. The Agreement aims to limit the greenhouse gas emissions so that the rise in average global temperature by the end of this century does not exceed 2° C or even 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels.
3. Developed countries acknowledged their historical responsibility in global warming and committed to donate \$ 1000 billion a year from 2020 to help developing countries to cope with climate change.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- ☐ a) 1 and 3 only
- ☐ b) 2 only
- ☐ c) 2 and 3 only
- ☐ d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.2) Consider the following statements regarding United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):

1. It was adopted at the "Rio Earth Summit" in 1992.
2. Its ultimate objective is to eliminate greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.
3. It is legally binding.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- ☐ a) 1 Only
- ☐ b) 2 Only
- ☐ c) 3 Only
- ☐ d) None of the above.

Q.3) With reference to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), consider the following statements:

1. The UNFCCC was adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Environment 1972.
2. Under the Convention, Annex II grouping include the countries with economies in transition and OECD member countries.
3. The UNFCCC Secretariat maintains the registry for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) established under the Paris Agreement.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- ☐ a) 1 only
- ☐ b) 1 and 2 only
- ☐ c) 3 only
- ☐ d) 2 and 3 only

Q.4) With reference to landmark developments that have taken place at UNFCCC Conferences, consider the following statements:

1. Green Climate Fund was an outcome of Conference of Parties (COP)-16 held at Cancun.
2. The Paris Agreement requires each Party to prepare, communicate and maintain successive Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
3. Powering Past Coal Alliance, launched at COP-23, is led by US and Canada.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- ☐ a) 1 and 2 only
- ☐ b) 2 and 3 only
- ☐ c) 1 and 3 only
- ☐ d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.5) Which of the following is/are correct with reference to the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN)?

1. It is the operational arm of the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism, hosted by the UN Environment Programme.
2. It promotes transfer of technologies for low carbon and climate resilient development.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- ☐ a) 1 Only
- ☐ b) 2 Only
- ☐ c) Both 1 and 2
- ☐ d) Neither 1 nor 2

GS Foundation Program 2024 | D3 | Benchmark Assignment #151

Subjective Questions:

Q.1) Discuss various features of Indian secularism. Mention various concerns related to secular democracy in India.

APPROACH:

1. Define Secularism.
2. Explain the features of Indian secularism.
3. Highlight the issues related to Indian secularism.
4. Conclusion.

Ans. Secularism means separation of religion from State i.e. State has no official religion nor any role in religious matters. In a secular State, religion is being treated as a personal matter. Indian Secularism: "Principled distance" from religion is the essence of Indian secularism. In India secularism emphasize dissociation of the state from religion and full freedom to all religions and tolerance of all religions. It also stands for equal opportunities for followers of all religions, and no discrimination on grounds of religion means the state views all religions as equal.

Key features of Indian concept of secularism:

1. **Positive concept:** Indian Constitution embodies the positive concept of secularism, i.e. giving equal respect to all religions or protecting all religions equally. The Western concept of secularism connotes a complete separation between the religion and the state.
2. **Principled distance:** Indian secularism allows the state to interfere in religious affairs, only to protect and safeguard the fundamental rights of the citizen. It helps liberal and egalitarian principles by reforming regressive practices through state intervention, such as ending the ban on women temple entry (Sabarimala Judgement).
3. **Equality:** The Constitution of India does not uphold any particular religion as the official religion of the Indian State. It prevents the State from discriminating against any citizen on the grounds of religion.
4. **Tolerance:** By acceptance of all religions rather than tight separation it reflects tolerant attitude of state and its people.
5. **Basic feature of Indian constitution:** Secularism is one of the basic features of the Constitution. In a landmark judgement in the Bommai case (1994), the Supreme Court upheld that secularism is a 'basic feature' of the Constitution.
6. **Concurrent power:** The 7th schedule of Indian constitution places religious institutions, charities and trusts into concurrent List, which means that both the central government of India and various state governments in India can make their own laws about religious institutions, charities and trusts.

Various concerns related to secular democracy in India:

1. While, the Indian Constitution declares the state being absolutely neutral to all religion, our society has steeped in religion.
2. Mingling of Religion and Politics i.e. mobilisation of votes on grounds of primordial identities like religion, caste and ethnicity, have put Indian secularism in danger.
3. Communal politics operates through communalization of social space, by spreading myths and stereotypes against minorities, through attack on rational values and by practicing a divisive ideological propaganda and politics.
4. Politicisation of any one religious group leads to the competitive politicisation of other groups, thereby resulting in inter-religious conflict.
5. One of the manifestations of communalism is communal riots. In recent past also, communalism has proved to be a great threat to the secular fabric of Indian polity.
6. Incidents like mob lynching and policies such as forced closure of slaughterhouses, campaigns against 'love jihad', reconversion or ghar- wapsi etc. reinforces communal tendencies in society.
7. In recent years there have been stray incidences of Muslim youth being inspired and radicalized by groups like ISIS which is very unfortunate for both India and world.

In India where diversity is multifaceted (religious, cultural, ethnic) secularism plays a crucial role. The essence of secularism lies in accommodation of varied social groups and overcoming tendencies that destructs the social fabric of any society.

Q.2) Outline the key results of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Elucidate India's commitments declared during this conference.

The 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Glasgow marked a crucial gathering of nations aimed at accelerating progress towards the goals outlined in the Paris Agreement and the broader UNFCCC objectives. Several noteworthy outcomes emerged from this summit, shaping the global discourse on climate action:

1. **Methane Pledge:** A significant milestone was achieved with the launch of a pioneering methane pledge by the European Union and the United States. This commitment, targeting a reduction of global methane emissions by 30% below 2020 levels by 2030, has the potential to prevent approximately 0.2 degrees Celsius of global warming. However, it's important to note that India chose not to sign this pledge.
2. **Deforestation Pledge:** Over 100 national leaders made a collective commitment to halt and reverse deforestation and land degradation by the end of 2030. This ambitious agreement builds upon the 2014 New York Declaration of Forests, representing a concerted effort to allocate more resources and mobilize action to combat deforestation.
3. **Climate Finance:** India raised a critical point about the need for enhanced climate finance. It emphasized that the previously established target of \$100 billion in climate finance, set in 2009, falls short of current requirements. India called for a substantial

increase, proposing a minimum of \$1 trillion to effectively address climate change. The unity of Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) was underscored as vital within the UNFCCC negotiations.

4. **Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS):** India introduced the Infrastructure for Resilient Island States initiative, focusing on supporting the development of vital infrastructure in small island developing nations (SIDN). These nations, particularly vulnerable to climate change, stand to benefit from timely information provided by India's space agency ISRO, addressing issues like cyclones, coral reef monitoring, and coastline surveillance.
5. **One Sun One World One Grid Group (OSOWOG):** An innovative initiative, led by India and the United Kingdom, seeks to harness solar energy and facilitate its seamless cross-border transmission. The Green Grids Initiative (GGI), comprising several governments, is aligned with this effort under the One Sun One World One Grid group.

India, a prominent participant at COP26, made a series of commitments known as the 'Panchamrit' promises:

1. Achieving net-zero emissions by 2070.
2. Increasing non-fossil energy capacity to 500 GW by 2030.
3. Reducing the economy's carbon intensity to 45% by 2030.
4. Fulfilling 50% of energy requirements through renewable sources by 2030.
5. Reducing 1 billion tonnes of carbon emissions from projected levels by 2030.

While COP26 represents a promising step towards global emissions reduction, the onus remains on major emitters to take more substantial action. For India, the path forward entails detailed action plans concerning the reduction of coal-based power generation and the promotion of electric vehicles. The commitments made reflect India's determination to contribute significantly to global emission reduction efforts, setting the stage for further collaboration and innovation in the realm of climate change mitigation.

Objective Questions:

Q.1) With reference to the Agreement at the UNFCCC Meeting in Paris in 2015, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The Agreement was signed by all the member countries of the UN and it will go into effect in 2017.
2. The Agreement aims to limit the greenhouse gas emissions so that the rise in average global temperature by the end of this century does not exceed 2° C or even 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels.
3. Developed countries acknowledged their historical responsibility in global warming and committed to donate \$ 1000 billion a year from 2020 to help developing countries to cope with climate change.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- ☐ a) 1 and 3 only
- ☐ b) 2 only
- ☐ c) 2 and 3 only
- ☐ d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans) b

Exp) Option b is correct

Paris Agreement is an international agreement to combat climate change.

The agreement aims to keep the global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Not all members have signed this agreement and the agreement is scheduled to go into effect in 2020.

COP21 agreed to extend the current goal of mobilizing \$100 billion a year in support by 2020 through 2025, with a higher goal for period after 2025 to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change.

Q.2) Consider the following statements regarding United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):

1. It was adopted at the "Rio Earth Summit" in 1992.
2. Its ultimate objective is to eliminate greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.
3. It is legally binding.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- ☐ a) 1 Only
- ☐ b) 2 Only
- ☐ c) 3 Only
- ☐ d) None of the above.

Ans) a

Exp) Option a is correct.

Statement 1 is correct: The UNFCCC is a "Rio Convention", one of three adopted at the "Rio Earth Summit" in 1992. Its sister Rio Conventions are the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The ultimate objective of the Convention is to "stabilize (and not eliminate) greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system." It states that "such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner."

Statement 3 is incorrect: The treaty itself is not legally binding as it does not set mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual countries and doesn't contain any enforcement mechanisms.

Knowledge Base: UNFCCC secretariat (UN Climate Change):

The UNFCCC secretariat (UN Climate Change) is the United Nations entity tasked with supporting the global response to the threat of climate change. UNFCCC stands for United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The UNFCCC secretariat is part of the United Nations. Created in 1994 and guided by its founding Charter, the UN takes action on the most critical issues confronting humanity in the

21st century, such as peace and security, climate change, sustainable development and human rights, among others.

Q.3) With reference to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), consider the following statements:

1. The UNFCCC was adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Environment 1972.
2. Under the Convention, Annex II grouping include the countries with economies in transition and OECD member countries.
3. The UNFCCC Secretariat maintains the registry for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) established under the Paris Agreement.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- ☐ a) 1 only
- ☐ b) 1 and 2 only
- ☐ c) 3 only
- ☐ d) 2 and 3 only

Ans) c

Exp) Option c is correct.

Statement 1 is incorrect. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is an international environmental treaty signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The Convention presently has 197 parties.

Statement 2 is incorrect. Under the UNFCCC, Annex II includes the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) members of Annex I, except the economies in transition (EIT) Parties. They are required to provide financial resources to enable developing countries to undertake emissions reduction activities under the Convention and to help them adapt to adverse effects of climate change. In addition, they are expected to promote the development and transfer of environmentally friendly technologies to EIT Parties and developing countries.

Statement 3 is correct. The secretariat provides technical expertise and assists in the **analysis and review of climate change information** reported by Parties and in the implementation of the Kyoto mechanisms. It also maintains the registry for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) established under the Paris Agreement, a key aspect of **implementation of the Paris Agreement**.

Q.4) With reference to landmark developments that have taken place at UNFCCC Conferences, consider the following statements:

1. Green Climate Fund was an outcome of Conference of Parties (COP)-16 held at Cancun.
2. The Paris Agreement requires each Party to prepare, communicate and maintain successive Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
3. Powering Past Coal Alliance, launched at COP-23, is led by US and Canada.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- ☐ a) 1 and 2 only
☐ b) 2 and 3 only
☐ c) 1 and 3 only
☐ d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans) a

Exp) Option a is correct

Statement 1 is correct: The mechanisms that were an outcome of **COP 16: Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund, Technology mechanism**. The GCF supports projects, programs and policies in developing country parties.

Statement 2 is correct: **Nationally determined contributions (NDCs)** are the core of the **Paris Agreement** and the achievement of the long-term goals. The **Paris Agreement** requires each Party to prepare, communicate and maintain successive **nationally determined contributions (NDCs)** that it intends to achieve. Parties shall pursue domestic mitigation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions.

Statement 3 is incorrect: The “**Powering Past Coal**” alliance was initiated by the **UK, Canada and Marshall Islands** at the annual Conference of Parties (**COP23**) meeting in **Bonn, Germany**. The aim is to phase out **coal-based power by 2030** and to accelerate the transition from coal to clean energy.

Major coal users like **China, the US, Russia have not joined**.

Knowledge Base:

- COP 26 was originally scheduled to take place in Nov 2020 in Glasgow, UK, but it was shifted to 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- NDCs embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Q.5) Which of the following is/are correct with reference to the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN)?

1. It is the operational arm of the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism, hosted by the UN Environment Programme.
2. It promotes transfer of technologies for low carbon and climate resilient development.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- ☐ a) 1 Only
☐ b) 2 Only
☐ c) Both 1 and 2
☐ d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans) c

Exp) Option c is correct.

Statement 1 is correct: The **Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN)** is the operational arm of the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism, hosted by the UN Environment

Programme and the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Serving as the core of the CTCN, network members respond to climate technology requests from developing country Parties to the UNFCCC.

Statement 2 is correct: The Centre promotes the accelerated transfer of environmentally sound technologies for low carbon and climate resilient development at the request of developing countries. CTCN provides technology solutions, capacity building and advice on policy, legal and regulatory frameworks tailored to the needs of individual countries.

Hence, both the statements are correct.

Knowledge Base: The Centre and the Network:

The CTCN consists of two parts: a center—a coordinating entity located in UN City Copenhagen—and a worldwide network of organizations that delivers CTCN services—both virtually and actually. In short, the centre operates the network, and together they constitute the CTCN.