

## EARTH SUMMITS

The decennial meetings/ conferences/ conventions of the world leaders organized by United Nations Organization (UNO) are commonly known as 'Earth Summits'. The main objectives of the UN earth summits are to bring together the national heads or their representatives and organizations at a common forum (i) to identify and update the issues/ challenges related to earth and its environment; (ii) to quantify them; (iii) to identify and look into probable solutions and remedial measures; and (iv) to develop and effective plan of action.

Initiated by the UNO, the first earth summit was organized in the year 1972 at Stockholm, Sweden. After that at a regular interval of 10 years the earth summits are being held, the last one in 2012 at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The list of UN Earth Summits:

(1) United Nations Conference on the Human Environment at Stockholm (UNCHS): The UNCHS was held from 5th to 16th June, 1972 at Stockholm, Sweden. It was UN's first major conference on global environmental issues. Leaders and representatives from 114 governments attended the conference. The action plan of the UNCHS contained 109 recommendations covering 6 broad issues. They were - (i) human settlement, (ii) natural resource management, (iii) pollution control, (iv) educational and social aspects of environment, (v) environment and development, and (vi) the role of international organizations.

(2) Earth Summit of Nairobi, Kenya: The second UN earth summit was held at Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, Africa from 10th to 18th May, 1992. But on account of some political issues and intervention of USA, the Nairobi summit is not considered an Earth Summit officially.

(3) United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) at Rio de Janeiro: The third UN earth summit was held from 3rd to 14th June, 1992 at the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro. Representatives of 178 governments, known as ratified parties attended the Rio summit. The conference aimed to reassess economic development to preserve natural resources and discuss the problem of pollution. The major issues discussed at the Rio summit include climate change, environmental conservation, global warming and natural disaster management. The action plan of 1992 earth summit is called 'Agenda 21'.

(4) World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) at Johannesburg: The fourth UN earth summit was organized from 26th August to 4th September at Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa. The declaration of the conference noted that population growth and economic development harm the environment; and thus advocated for the concept of sustainable development. It was also stated that every human has the right to a clean and healthy environment.

(5) United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) at Rio de Janeiro: The fifth and last earth summit was held from 20th to 22nd June, 2012 once again at Rio de Janeiro,

Brazil. This particular earth summit is popularly called the Rio+20 summit. The two basic themes were discussed at the summit - (i) how to build a green economy and (ii) how to improve global and international coordination for sustainable development. The Rio+20 summit included three principal objectives - (i) to secure political commitment for sustainable development; (ii) to assess the progress and gaps in meeting previous commitments; and (iii) to address new and emerging challenges.